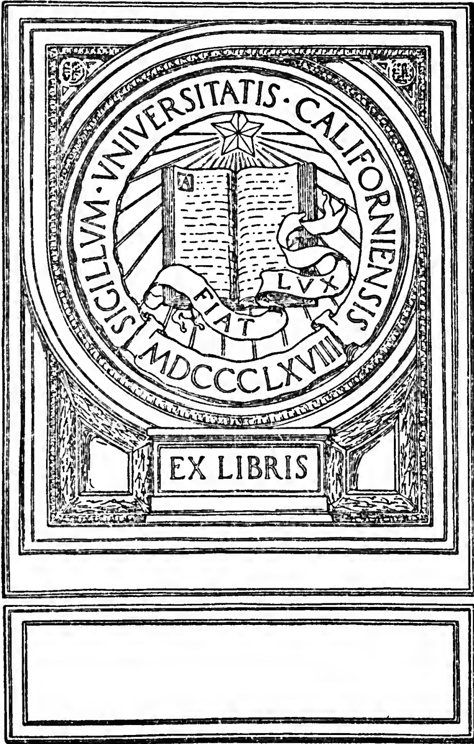
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either you are involved in a pattern of action that has as its goal self-enhancement, or you are trying to overcome your natural self through some device, some idea, some plan.

In other words you are running scared. what you want is to overcome fear How? (this is not the same thing as saying you want happiness).

what is the

THE AMERICAN OF THE FUTURE

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THE AMERICAN OF THE FUTURE

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

BRANDER MATTHEWS

NEW YORK
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1909

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To WM. M. POLK

PHYSICIAN AND FRIEND

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THE AMERICAN OF THE FUTURE

[This address was delivered before the American Library Association at Narragansett Pier, on July 4, 1906.]

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE AMERICAN OF THE FUTURE

ONE Monday in the spring of 1906 a New York morning paper recorded the fact that "ten thousand men, women and children, immigrants from all sections of the globe, were inside New York harbor before sundown yesterday, as many more were on big immigrant vessels reported off Sandy Hook and three times ten thousand on other vessels little more than two hundred miles from port. All told, at least fifty-two thousand immigrants will have reacht port by Thursday morning, the largest number that has yet come to New York at one time." The new-comers belonged to many different nationalities. Some came from Great Britain and Ireland; some from Germany and Austria; some from Russia and Poland; and more from Italy. The reporter noted that there were also a few French and a few Arabians.

More than fifty thousand in four days!—and these were only the advance guard of the host that followed fast all thru the lengthening days of the spring months. Men and women and children from every part of Europe, even from

Africa and from Asia, poured into New York to scatter themselves thruout the United States. A few of them intended to work only during the summer and then to return whence they came; but the most of them were resolved to lead a new life in the New World. They wisht to better themselves; and they did not pause to ask whether we wanted them or whether their coming was for our good also. They left us to ask these questions, and to find such answer as we could.

> Wide and unguarded stand our gates,
> And thru them presses a wild motley throng—
> Men from the Volga and the Tatar steppes,
> Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,
> Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt and Slav,
> Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
> These bringing with them unknown gods and rites,
> Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.
>
> . . . .
>
> O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well
> To leave the gates unguarded?
>
> . . . .
>
> For so of old
> The thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome,
> And where the temples of the Cæsars stood
> The lean wolf unmolested made her lair.

In these lofty lines Aldrich sharply phrased what many Americans vaguely feared. The motley horde that invades us hopes to better its condition; but what of our condition? What

effect will Malayan and Scythian and Slav have upon us? Are they worthy to be welcomed within our commonwealth? Will they trample America as the thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome? Must we dread the coming of a day when the lean wolf unmolested shall make her lair in the deserted streets where once the many churches stood, the stately libraries and the frequent schoolhouses?

Our inexpugnable optimism is prompt to dismiss this dire possibility; and it is still our pride to proffer a refuge to the opprest. But the danger-signal has been heeded; and the gates are no longer unguarded. The "featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho" are denied admission; and the wisdom of this exclusion is evident, however harsh we may sometimes seem in its application. These orientals have a civilization, older than ours, hostile to ours, exclusive and repellent. They do not come here to throw in their lot with us. They abhor assimilation and they have no desire to be absorbed. They mean to remain aliens; they insist upon being taken back when they are dead,—and we do well to keep them out while they are alive.

We exclude also with equal wisdom the maimed and the halt and the blind. We refuse to receive the wastrel and the broken driftwood of humanity; —in a single year we have sent back whence they

came twelve thousand undesirable immigrants, some of them insane, some of them diseased, but most of them mere weaklings likely soon to become dependent. We have accepted the principle that it is our duty to defend our coasts against an undesirable invasion. We are glad still to provide a refuge for the opprest, but only when those who demand hospitality are fit to be incorporated in our body politic and only when they are willing to accept loyally the laws under which they seek shelter. Of late we have been putting hard questions to all new arrivals at our ports, and if they have no answer ready, the gates are closed in their faces. We have seen in time the danger of a liberality too lax; and we have recognized the sagacity of the late Mayo-Smith's saying that those "who desire that the United States should discharge the function of a world-asylum forget that asylums are not governed by their inmates."

But there are those among us who are not satisfied with this setting up of barriers against the unfit, and who see a menace to American standards in the admission even of the physically fit, if they come from alien stocks. There are those —and they are not a few—who would keep out the "men from the Volga and the Tatar steppes" and all "bringing with them unknown gods and rites." Willing enough still to welcome Teuton

and even Celt, they see peril to our citizenship in granting it to Slav and to Scythian, with "tiger passions, here to stretch their claws." They look askant at New York with its immense masses of imperfectly assimilated foreigners, with its Little Italys, with its mysterious Chinatown, with its Syrian quarter, with its half-million of Russian Jews. They ask themselves whether the metropolis of the United States can any longer be considered an American city.

To this last question the answer is easy. New York is quite as American to-day as it ever has been in any of its three centuries. Diversity of blood has always been its dominant characteristic. As one of its historians has tersely asserted, "no sooner has one set of varying elements been fused together than another stream has been poured into the crucible. There probably has been no period in the city's growth during which the New Yorkers whose parents were born in New York formed the majority of the population; and there never has been a time when the bulk of the citizens were of English blood." The history of the metropolis from which these quotations are taken was written by Theodore Roosevelt, a typical New Yorker as he is a typical American; and he illustrates in his own person this commingling of stocks. He is of Dutch descent, with other ancestors who were Huguenot

and Scotch-Irish; and he has declared that so far as he himself is aware, he has not a drop of English blood in his veins.

The diversity of origin is nothing new in American cities, and equally old is the dread of the successive new-comers. It is a curious feature of the settlement of this country,—so Mr. Roosevelt pointed out elsewhere in his vigorous narrative of the development of his native city,—"that each mass of immigrants feels much distrust and contempt for the mass—usually of a different nationality—which comes a generation later." There is piquancy in the fact that the chief immigration into New York City in the thirty or forty years following the Revolution was of English stock from Connecticut and Massachusetts, and that the old New Yorkers regarded this New England invasion with jealous hostility. Some of these old New Yorkers were descendants of the original Dutch, and of the Walloons and Huguenots who had come over while the little town was still New Amsterdam; and some were descendants of the English, the Scotch, the Scotch-Irish and the Germans, who had arrived in increasing numbers in the century between the downfall of Peter Stuyvesant and the first public appearance of Alexander Hamilton at the outbreak of the Revolution.

The New Englanders were swiftly assimilated

as the Huguenots had been a century earlier; and they, in turn, disliked and dreaded the Irish invasion that followed soon, and the later German invasion that came before and during the Civil War. But in that bitter conflict the Irish and the Germans and their children proved themselves stanch Americans; they revealed their belief that this was not only a good land to live in but a good country to die for. And the Irish and the Germans in their turn also disliked and dreaded the more recent invasion of the Italians and of the Russian Jews; and they joined with the older New Yorkers in wondering whether these strange new-comers were not unfit for the citizenship which had been generously granted to them. Yet there is scarcely a larger proportion of foreigners in the population of New York, at the beginning of the twentieth century, than there was at the end of the seventeenth; nor are the dangerous elements proportionately larger now than they were then. The fire still glows beneath the crucible and the process of fusing is as rapid and as complete to-day as ever it has been in the past. The children are the flux for this fusing; they are taken captive first by the schools, and then the public libraries bind them fast; and finally the young folks react on their parents. Sooner or later, the foreigners are made over; they are born anew; and they have a proud

consciousness that they have come into their birthright.

When Maxim Gorky was asked what had most imprest him on his arrival in New York, he answered that it was the bodily bearing of the throngs in the streets. "They stand erect," he said; "they do not cringe." And yet a large majority of the men who made up the throngs were immigrants or the sons of immigrants. In their native land they may not have been allowed to assert their manhood; but they had it in them to assert when they arrived here and adjusted themselves to our free conditions. And their self-assertion and their self-expression have been to our profit, since the most of them came from stocks which had been denied the opportunity to select out their best. They have brought undeveloped possibilities to this country where careers are widely opened to all talents. It needs to be noted that two of the most distinguished electrical inventors of America are of Slavonic birth. That shrewd observer of social conditions, Miss Jane Addams, has asserted that we talk far too loosely about our immigrants. We use the phrase "the scum of Europe" and other unwarrantable words, "without realizing that the undevelopt peasant may be much more valuable to us here than the more highly developt but also more highly specialized town-

dweller, who may much less readily develop the acquired characteristics which the new environment demands."

"The way to compare men is to compare their respective ideals," said Thoreau; "the actual man is too complex to deal with." In some mysterious fashion we Americans have imposed our ideals on the Irish and on the Germans, as we are now imposing them on the Italians and on the Russian Jews. The children and the grandchildren of these ignorant immigrants learn to revere Washington and Lincoln, and they take swift pride in being Americans. They thrill in response to the same patriotic appeals which move us of the older stocks; and when the nation celebrated, in 1889, the centenary of the constitution of the United States, nowhere were the portraits of the Father of the Country more frequent than here in New York, and in its Little Italy and in its Ghetto. When the President of the United States declared that a certain friend of his was "the most useful citizen of New York," he named not a native but a man who was by birth a Dane; and if any one with equal opportunity for knowing should undertake to draw up a list of the five most useful citizens of New York, he would have to include also one Hebrew of German birth. If this observer should extend the list to ten he would be forced

to set down the name of another German Hebrew whose service to the public good has been quite as indisputable.

The census records the number of those in our cities and in our states who are of foreign birth and also those who are of foreign parentage; and these figures seem to suggest that there exists among us a mass of undigested aliens. But in so far as the statistics do suggest this they convey a false impression. The boys and girls of Little Italy speak English as fluently as they speak Italian; and while they salute the flag in school, in the street they amuse themselves with 'Little Sally Waters' and with the traditional games of Anglo-Saxon youth. Already are the intelligent sons of Italian immigrants coming up thru the high schools of New York and the City College, and entering the graduate-departments of our universities to fit themselves for the higher degrees. It is not uncommon to hear a young man of German parentage term his own father "a Dutchman." The sons of the Fatherland often forget their German, and their children do not always acquire it. A prominent lawyer of New York is the nephew of a prominent German author; and he told me once that he had read only those of his uncle's works which had been translated into English. The German theater in New York is deserted by the sons and

daughters of the older Germans who subsidize it; the young people prefer to see plays in the English language with which they are more familiar.

Even among the immigrants themselves, the process of Americanization is sometimes extraordinarily swift. It did not take long for Gallatin and Agassiz and Schurz to make themselves at home here; and the less gifted and the less well educated foreigner has an even stronger incentive to get out of his old-world shell. When the late Professor Boyesen went to Minnesota, he was surprized to find that his fellow Scandinavians preferred to speak English even to him; and it was explained to him that the return to their native tongue would reveal their peasant origin and thus testify to their social inferiority to a gentleman who had been graduated from the university of Upsala, whereas the use of English lifted them all to the lofty tableland of American citizenship.

The process of assimilation, at work now under our own eyes, was visible also to our fathers and to our forefathers. Indeed, there is no stronger phenomenon in all the marvelous history of civilization than this very process,—than this Americanization of countless aliens, generation after generation, with no violent modification of American ideals. Three centuries ago "men of

sturdy English fiber began to come in search of mental, religious and economic freedom," as an acute student of social conditions has phrased it. "Daring men in search of new experiences came as adventurers and discoverers. Men of moral daring came in search of religious and civic freedom. Men of industrial and commercial daring came in search of larger opportunity. These men establisht ideals and set standards and created tendencies for a nation." These standards, these ideals, these tendencies still survive after almost three hundred years, modified a little, no doubt, but developt only, not radically transformed, and never renounced. The American of to-day, whatever his descent, has most of the characteristics of the American of yesterday. The ideals endure; and the aspirations have not been blunted by time or turned aside by alien influences.

It is true enough that the makers of America were mainly of British origin. Benjamin Franklin and Washington Irving were the sons of immigrants, one English and the other Scotch. But from the very beginning the admixture of other elements was abundant, most obvious in New York but perceptible even in New England. Before the Revolution, besides the Dutch in New York there were Swedes in New Jersey; in Pennsylvania there were Germans and Scotch-

Irish; and in New York and South Carolina there were Huguenots,—and no single stock has contributed to our citizenship so many men of ability in proportion to its numbers as this sturdy and stalwart group of French Protestants. Thus we see that there is no basis for the prevalent belief that the people of the United States were once almost purely English in descent, and that they have been diluted by foreign admixture only since the war of 1812. In the Louisiana Purchase and in the Northwest Territory there were many French settlers; and men of Spanish descent were incorporated by the acquisition of Texas and of California. The commingling of these many bloods during our first century of national life must be more or less responsible for the divergence now obvious between American ideals, American standards and American tendencies, on the one hand, and British ideals, British standards and British tendencies, on the other. Both sets are derived from the same root, from the ideals, the standards, and the tendencies of the older Anglo-Saxon stock, transplanted in England from the Teutonic mainland and stimulated by the commingled Hebrew and Greek and Roman ideals of modern Christianity.

It is well for us to recall the fact that the English race itself was of many mingled strains, Celtic and Teutonic, welded into unity at last,

and achieving its richest expression under Elizabeth. But while the British have been inbreeding for centuries now, with only occasional enrichment by alien stocks, Spanish-Hebrew, Huguenot and German, we Americans have been absorbing vigorous foreign blood; and to this infusion must be credited some portion of the differences between the subjects of the British king and the citizens of the American republic. These differences are abundant and they are evident; and there is no need to dwell on them here.

It is the testimony of many of the intelligent Europeans who have come here to study us in recent years that we Americans are less insular than our kin across the sea, less set in our ways, more open-minded. Señor Juan Valera, sometime Spanish Minister in Washington, in the preface to his delightful tale of 'Pepita Ximenes' declared that the American public reads a great deal, is indulgent and "differs from the British public—which is eminently exclusive in its tastes —by its cosmopolitan spirit." It may be said that this is one of the variances between the Americans and the British due to the influence exerted by those elements in our population which are not Anglo-Saxon and not even Teutonic. Cecil Rhodes once scornfully commented on the "unctuous rectitude" of the British; and Lowell

once declared that "England seems to be the incarnation of the 'Kingdom of this world.'" Neither of these accusations will lie against us Americans, open as we may be in other respects to the conviction of sin. Perhaps the reason is to be found in the influence of the Celt, of the Huguenot and of the Irish. To this same Celtic softening of Teutonic harshness we may ascribe also the broader development here of that social instinct which is deficient in Great Britain and which is dominant in France. This social instinct manifests itself in manifold forms, in a wider sympathy, in a friendlier good nature, in a more thoro toleration, both religious and political. It has contributed its share to the core of idealism which sustains the American character, but which is often veiled from view by sordid externals.

When we consider all these things carefully, we cannot help wondering whether we have not been guilty of flagrant conceit in our assumption that we could not possibly profit by any infusion of other bloods than the Teutonic. We find ourselves face to face with the question whether the so-called Anglo-Saxon stock is of a truth so near to perfection that any admixture is certain to be harmful. We find ourselves doubting whether this stock has always done so well that it has an undisputed right to a halo on demand.

Much as we owe to England, we have other debts also; and even New England, of which we are all justly proud, is not now the focus of the whole United States.

The New Englanders long ago relapst from orthodoxy into unitarianism, and then their wavering faith faded into a chilly agnosticism, until now their piety often takes the mild form of ancestor-worship, revealed in not a few of them by a high opinion of themselves as the descendants of their sainted forefathers. But to some of us 'My Country! 'tis of Thee' seems only a sectional lyric, by a bard who did not think nationally. There is a certain significance in the fact that political stability, and even political sagacity, have been most evident in certain of the sections where the foreign-born citizens are most thickly settled, and least evident in certain other sections where the inhabitants can trace their descent to forefathers of American birth.

All that the New Englanders could bring over from Great Britain was a British standard; and if the American standard now differs from the British standard this must be due, more or less, to the pressure exerted in America by a contribution other than British. If we to-day prefer, as we do undoubtedly, the existing American standards and ideals and tendencies to the British standards and ideals and tendencies, we must

recognize that the various foreign elements in the United States have exerted an influence satisfactory to us now, however much our forefathers may once have dreaded it. We must recognize that the commingling of stocks which has been going on here in the past has been beneficial—or at least that its results are acceptable to us at present. And in all probability our children will admit also that the commingling which is going on in the present and which will go on in the future, is likely also to be equally acceptable and equally beneficial.

The strength of the founders of the American republic lay chiefly in character. It is not by brilliancy, by intellect or even by genius that Washington and Jay and John Adams imprest themselves on their fellow-citizens in Virginia, in New York, and in Massachusetts. Ability they had in abundance, no doubt; but it was by character they conquered, by their moral individuality. And it is the grossest conceit for us to assume that character is the privilege or the prerogative of any single stock. We have a right to hope, and even to believe, that whatever we may lose by the commingling of the future, by the admixture of other racial types than the Teutonic and the Celtic, will be made up to us by what we shall thereby gain. Our type may be a little transformed, but it is not at all likely

to be deteriorated. There is really very little danger indeed that the preaching of the Puritans will ever be superseded here by the practices of the Impuritans.

It is true that the latest new-comers are not altogether Teutonic or even Celtic; they are Latin and Slav and Semitic. But it is only a stubborn pride, singularly out of place in an American of the twentieth century, which makes us dread evil consequences from this admixture. The Teuton here has been suppled by the Celt; but the resulting race may benefit still by attributes of the Latin and of the Slav. The suave manner of the Italian may modify in time the careless discourtesy which discredits us now in the eyes of foreign visitors. The ardor of the Slav may quicken our appreciation of music and of the fine arts. Possibly these gains may have to be paid for by a little relaxing of the unresting energy which is our salient characteristic to-day. It may be that when milder strains are commingled with the Teutonic-Celtic stock, there will be other modifications, some of them seemingly less satisfactory. But there is no reason to suppose that in the future we shall not make our profit out of the best that every contributing blood can bring to us, since this is exactly what we have been doing in the past.

In 1900 there were ten millions of the foreign

born here in the United States;—but of these three-quarters were of English or Teutonic or Celtic blood, the very elements out of which first the British and then the Americans have been compounded. That is to say, there were less than three million out of some seventy million whites that the most rigid stickler for racial purity could possibly object to. In 1900 again there was only a million of these foreign-born who could not speak English. And who doubts that the children of this million are now busy acquiring our language to fit themselves for the struggle of life? These children are indeed likely to look upon English as their mother-tongue; and with the language they are taking over also the ideals of the community in which they are growing to manhood,—ideals which the grandchildren of the immigrants will have absorbed unconsciously. It is well for us to remind ourselves that ideals are communal and not individual; they are the result of environment and not of heredity. Ideals are not born in the blood,—even tho instincts may be; they are taken over from our associates; they are implanted by the group-feeling. As Lowell once phrased it sharply, "The pressure of public opinion is like the pressure of the atmosphere; —you can't see it, but it is sixteen pounds to the square inch none the less."

We need not fear any weakening of the Teutonic framework of our social order. Beyond all question we shall preserve the common law of England and the English language,—for these are priceless possessions in which the welcome invaders are glad to be allowed to share. The good old timbers of the ship of state are still solid and the sturdy vessel is steered by the same compass.

One of the best equipt observers of American life and one of the shrewdest also, Professor Giddings, faces the future fearlessly. He holds that in the coming years a mixture of elements not Anglo-Teuton "will soften the emotional nature" and "quicken the poetic and artistic nature" of the American people; gentler in our thoughts and feelings because of the Alpine strain (and this includes the Slav), we shall find ourselves "with a higher power to enjoy the beautiful things of life because of the Celtic and the Latin blood." And as if this prophecy of emotional benefit was not heartening enough, Professor Giddings holds up to us the high hope of an intellectual benefit also; probably thru the commingling of bloods "we shall become more clearly and fearlessly rational,—in a word, more scientific."

(1906.)

AMERICAN CHARACTER

[This address was delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa of Columbia University in June, 1905; and it was repeated at Rutgers College on Charter Day in November, 1905.]

AMERICAN CHARACTER

I

IN a volume recording a series of talks with Tolstoi, publisht by a French writer in the final months of 1904, we are told that the Russian novelist thought the Dukhobors had attained to a perfected life, in that they were simple, free from envy, wrath and ambition, detesting violence, refraining from theft and murder, and seeking ever to do good. Then the Parisian interviewer askt which of the peoples of the world seemed most remote from the perfection to which the Dukhobors had elevated themselves; and when Tolstoi returned that he had given no thought to this question, the French correspondent suggested that we Americans deserved to be held up to scorn as the least worthy of nations.

The tolerant Tolstoi askt his visitor why he thought so ill of us; and the journalist of Paris then put forth the opinion that we Americans are "a people terribly practical, avid of pleasure, systematically hostile to all idealism. The

ambition of the American's heart, the passion of his life, is money; and it is rather a delight in the conquest and possession of money than in the use of it. The Americans ignore the arts; they despise disinterested beauty. And now, moreover, they are imperialists. They could have remained peaceful without danger to their national existence; but they had to have a fleet and an army. They set out after Spain, and attackt her; and now they begin to defy Europe. Is there not something scandalous in this revelation of the conquering appetite in a new people with no hereditary predisposition toward war?"

It is to the credit of the French correspondent that after setting down this fervid arraignment, he was honest enough to record Tolstoi's dissent. But altho he dissented, the great Russian expresst little surprize at the virulence of this diatribe. No doubt it voiced an opinion familiarized to him of late by many a newspaper of France and of Germany. Fortunately for us, the assertion that foreign nations are a contemporaneous posterity is not quite true. Yet the opinion of foreigners, even when most at fault, must have its value for us as a useful corrective of conceit. We ought to be proud of our country; but we need not be vain about it. Indeed, it would be difficult for the most pa-

triotic of us to find any satisfaction in the figure of the typical American which apparently exists in the mind of most Europeans, and which seems to be a composite photograph of the backwoodsman of Cooper, the negro of Mrs. Stowe, and the Mississippi river-folk of Mark Twain, modified perhaps by more vivid memories of Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Surely this is a strange monster; and we need not wonder that foreigners feel towards it as Voltaire felt toward the prophet Habakkuk,—whom he declared to be "capable of anything."

It has seemed advisable to quote here what the Parisian journalist said of us, not because he himself is a person of consequence, indeed, he is so obscure that there is no need even to mention his name, but because he has had the courage to attempt what Burke declared to be impossible,—to draw an indictment against a whole nation. It would be easy to retort on him in kind, for, unfortunately,—and to the grief of all her friends,—France has laid herself open to accusations as sweeping and as violent. It would be easy to dismiss the man himself as one whose outlook on the world is so narrow that it seems to be little more than what he can get thru a chance slit in the wall of his own self-sufficiency. It would be easy to answer him in either of these fashions, but what is easy is rarely

worth while; and it is wiser to weigh what he said and to see if we cannot find our profit in it.

Sifting the essential charges from out the mass of his malevolent accusation, we find this Frenchman alleging first, that we Americans care chiefly for making money; second, that we are hostile to art and to all forms of beauty; and thirdly, that we are devoid of ideals. These three allegations may well be considered, one by one, beginning with the assertion that we are mere money-makers.

II

Now, in so far as this Frenchman's belief is but an exaggeration of the saying of Napoleon's, that the English were a nation of shopkeepers, we need not wince, for the Emperor of the French found to his cost that those same English shopkeepers had a stout stomach for fighting. Nor need we regret that we can keep shop profitably, in these days when the doors of the bankers' vaults are the real gates of the Temple of Janus, war being impossible until they open. There is no reason for alarm or for apology so long as our shopkeeping does not cramp our muscle or curb our spirit, for, as Bacon declared three centuries ago, "walled towns, stored arsenals and armories, goodly races of horse, chariots

of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery and the like, all this is but a sheep in a lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout and warlike."

Even the hostile French traveler did not accuse us of any flabbiness of fiber; indeed, he declaimed especially against our "conquering appetite," which seemed to him scandalous "in a new people with no hereditary predisposition toward war." But here he fell into a common blunder; the United States may be a new nation—altho as a fact the stars-and-stripes is now older than the tricolor of France, the union-jack of Great Britain and the standards of those new-comers among the nations, Italy and Germany,—the United States may be a new nation, but the people here have had as many ancestors as the population of any other country. The people here, moreover, have "a hereditary predisposition toward war," or at least toward adventure, since they are, every man of them, descended from some European more venturesome than his fellows, readier to risk the perils of the Western Ocean and bolder to front the unknown dangers of an unknown land. The warlike temper, the aggressiveness, the imperialistic sentiment,—these are in us no new development of unexpected ambition; and they ought not to surprize any one familiar with the way in

which our forefathers graspt this Atlantic coast first, then thrust themselves across the Alleghanies, spread abroad to the Mississippi, and reacht out at last to the Rockies and to the Pacific. The lust of adventure may be dangerous, but it is no new thing; it is in our blood, and we must reckon with it.

Perhaps it is because "the breed and disposition of the people" is "stout and warlike" that our shopkeeping has been successful enough to awaken envious admiration among other races whose energy may have been relaxt of late. After all, the arts of war and the arts of peace are not so unlike; and in either a triumph can be won only by an imagination strong enough to foresee and to divine what is hidden from the weakling. We are a trading community, after all and above all, even if we come of fighting stock. We are a trading community, just as Athens was, and Venice and Florence. And like the men of these earlier commonwealths, the men of the United States are trying to make money. They are striving to make money not solely to amass riches, but partly because having money is the outward and visible sign of success,—because it is the most obvious measure of accomplishment.

In his talk with Tolstoi our French critic revealed an unexpected insight when he asserted

that the passion of American life was not so much the use of money as a delight in the conquest of it. Many an American man of affairs would admit without hesitation that he would rather make half a million dollars than inherit a million. It is the process he enjoys, rather than the result; it is the tough tussle in the open market which gives him the keenest pleasure, and not the idle contemplation of wealth safely stored away. He girds himself for battle and fights for his own hand; he is the son and the grandson of the stalwart adventurers who came from the Old World to face the chances of the new. This is why he is unwilling to retire as men are wont to do in Europe when their fortunes are made. Merely to have money does not greatly delight him—altho he would regret not having it; but what does delight him unceasingly is the fun of making it.

The money itself often he does not know what to do with; and he can find no more selfish use for it than to give it away. He seems to recognize that his making it was in some measure due to the unconscious assistance of the community as a whole; and he feels it his duty to do something for the people among whom he lives. It must be noted that the people themselves also expect this from him; they expect him sooner or later to pay his footing. As a result of this

pressure of public opinion and of his own lack of interest in money itself, he gives freely. In time he comes to find pleasure in this as well; and he applies his business sagacity to his benefactions. Nothing is more characteristic of modern American life than this pouring out of private wealth for public service. Nothing remotely resembling it is to be seen now in any country of the Old World; and not even in Athens in its noblest days was there a larger-handed lavishness of the individual for the benefit of the community.

Again, in no country of the Old World is the prestige of wealth less powerful than it is here. This, of course, the foreigner fails to perceive; he does not discover that it is not the man who happens to possess money that we regard with admiration but the man who is making money, and thereby proving his efficiency and indirectly benefiting the community. To many it may sound like an insufferable paradox to assert that nowhere in the civilized world to-day is money itself of less weight than here in the United States; but the broader his opportunity the more likely is an honest observer to come to this unexpected conclusion. Fortunes are made in a day almost, and they may fade away in a night; as the Yankee proverb put it pithily, "it's only three generations from shirt-sleeves

to shirt-sleeves." Wealth is likely to lack something of its glamor in a land where well-being is widely diffused and where a large proportion of the population have either had a fortune and lost it, or else expect to gain one in the immediate future.

Probably also there is no country which now contains more men who do not greatly care for large gains and who have gladly given up money-making for some other occupation they found more profitable for themselves. These are the men like Thoreau—in whose 'Walden,' now half a century old, we can find an emphatic declaration of all the latest doctrines of the simple life. We have all heard of Agassiz,—best of Americans, even tho he was born in another republic, —how he repelled the proffer of large terms for a series of lectures, with the answer that he had no time to make money. Closely akin was the reply of a famous machinist in response to an inquiry as to what he had been doing,—to the effect that he had accomplisht nothing of late, —"we have just been building engines and making money, and I'm about tired of it." There are not a few men to-day in these toiling United States who hold with Ben Jonson that "money never made any man rich,—but his mind."

But while this is true, while there are some men among us who care little for money, and

while there are many who care chiefly for the making of it, ready to share it when made with their fellow-citizens, candor compels the admission that there are also not a few who are greedy and grasping, selfish and shameless, and who stand forward, conspicuous and unscrupulous, as if to justify to the full the aspersions, which foreigners cast upon us. Altho these men manage for the most part to keep within the letter of the law, their morality is that of the wrecker and of the pirate. It is a symptom of health in the body politic that the proposal has been made to inflict social ostracism upon the criminal rich. We need to stiffen our conscience and to set up a loftier standard of social intercourse, refusing to fellowship with the men who make their money by overriding the law or by undermining it, —just as we should have declined the friendship of Captain Kidd laden down with stolen treasure.

In the immediate future these men will be made to feel that they are under the ban of public opinion. One sign of an acuter sensitiveness is the recent outcry against the acceptance of "tainted money" for the support of good works. Altho it is wise always to give a good deed the credit of a good motive, yet it is impossible sometimes not to suspect that certain large gifts have an aspect of "conscience money." Some of them seem to be the result of a desire

to divert public attention from the evil way in which the money was made to the nobler manner in which it is spent. They appear to be the attempt of a social outlaw to buy his peace with the community. Apparently there are rich men among us, who, having sold their honor for a price, would now gladly give up the half of their fortunes to get it back.

Candor compels the admission also that by the side of the criminal rich there exists the less noxious but more offensive class of the idle rich, who lead lives of wasteful luxury and of empty excitement. When the French reporter who talked with Tolstoi called us Americans "avid of pleasure" it was this little group he had in mind, as he may have seen the members of it splurging about in Paris, squandering and self-advertizing. Altho these idle rich now exhibit themselves most openly and to least advantage in Paris and in London, their foolish doings are recorded superabundantly in our own newspapers; and their demoralizing influence is spread abroad. The snobbish report of their misguided attempts at amusement may even be a source of danger in that it seems to recognize a false standard of social success or in that it may excite a miserable ambition to emulate these pitiful frivolities. But there is no need of delaying longer over the idle rich; they

are only a few, and they have doomed themselves to destruction, since it is an inexorable fact that those who break the laws of nature can have no hope of executive clemency.

> Patience a little; learn to wait,
> Years are long on the clock of fate.

III

The second charge which the wandering Parisian journalist brought against us was that we ignore the arts and that we despise disinterested beauty. Here again the answer that is easiest is not altogether satisfactory. There is no difficulty in declaring that there are American artists, both painters and sculptors, who have gained the most cordial appreciation in Paris itself, or in drawing attention to the fact that certain of the minor arts,—that of the silversmith, for one, and for another, that of the glass-blower and the glass-cutter,—flourish in the United States at least as freely as they do anywhere else, while the art of designing in stained glass has had a new birth here, which has given it a vigorous vitality lacking in Europe since the Middle Ages. It would not be hard to show that our American architects are now undertaking to solve new problems wholly unknown to the builders of Europe, and that

they are often succeeding in this grapple with unprecedented difficulty. Nor would it take long to draw up a list of the concerted efforts of certain of our cities to make themselves more worthy and more sightly with parks well planned and with public buildings well proportioned and appropriately decorated. We might even invoke the memory of the evanescent loveliness of the White City that graced the shores of Lake Michigan a few years ago; and we might draw attention again to the Library of Congress, a later effort of the allied arts of the architect, the sculptor and the painter.

But however full of high hope for the future we may esteem these several instances of our reaching out for beauty, we must admit—if we are honest with ourselves—that they are all more or less exceptional, and that to offset this list of artistic achievements the Devil's Advocate could bring forward a damning catalog of crimes against good taste which would go far to prove that the feeling for beauty is dead here in America and also the desire for it. The Devil's Advocate would bid us consider the flaring and often vulgar advertisements that disfigure our highways, the barbaric ineptness of many of our public buildings, the squalor of the outskirts of our towns and villages, the hideousness and horror of the slums in most of

our cities, the negligent toleration of dirt and disorder in our public conveyances, and many another pitiable deficiency of our civilization present in the minds of all of us.

The sole retort possible is a plea of confession and avoidance, coupled with a promise of reformation. These evils are evident and they cannot be denied. But they are less evident today than they were yesterday; and we may honestly hope that they will be less evident tomorrow. The bare fact that they have been observed warrants the belief that unceasing effort will be made to do away with them. Once aroused, public opinion will work its will in due season. And here occasion serves to deny boldly the justice of a part of the accusation which the French reporter brought against us. It may be true that we "ignore the arts,"—altho this is an obvious overstatement of the case; but it is not true that we "despise beauty." However ignorant the American people may be as a whole, they are in no sense hostile toward art—as certain other peoples seem to be. On the contrary, they welcome it; with all their ignorance, they are anxious to understand it; they are pathetically eager for it. They are so desirous of it that they want it in a hurry, only too often to find themselves put off with an empty imitation. But the desire itself is indis-

putable; and its accomplishment is likely to be helpt along by the constant commingling here of peoples from various other stocks than the Anglo-Saxon, since the mixture of races tends always to a swifter artistic development.

It is well to probe deeper into the question and to face the fact that not only in the arts but also in the sciences we are not doing all that may fairly be expected of us. Athens was a trading city as New York is, but New York has had no Sophocles and no Phidias. Florence and Venice were towns whose merchants were princes, but no American city has yet brought forth a Giotto, a Dante, a Titian. It is now nearly threescore years and ten since Emerson delivered his address on the 'American Scholar,' which has well been styled our intellectual Declaration of Independence, and in which he expressed the hope that "perhaps the time is already come . . . when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fulfil the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of a mechanical skill." Nearly seventy years ago was this prophecy uttered which still echoes unaccomplisht.

In the nineteenth century in which we came to maturity as a nation, no one of the chief leaders of art, even including literature in its

broadest aspects, and no one of the chief leaders in science, was native to our country. Perhaps we might claim that Webster was one of the world's greatest orators and that Parkman was one of the world's greatest historians; but probably the experts outside of the United States would be found unprepared and unwilling to admit either claim, however likely it may be to win acceptance in the future. Lincoln is indisputably one of the world's greatest statesmen; and his fame is now firmly establisht thruout the whole of civilization. But this is all we can assert; and we cannot deny that we have given birth to very few indeed of the foremost poets, dramatists, novelists, painters, sculptors, architects or scientific discoverers of the last hundred years.

Alfred Russell Wallace, whose renown is linkt with Darwin's and whose competence as a critic of scientific advance is beyond dispute, has declared that the nineteenth century was the most wonderful of all since the world began. He asserts that the scientific achievements of the last hundred years, both in the discovery of general principles and in their practical application, exceed in number the sum total of the scientific achievements to be credited to all the centuries that went before. He considers, first of all, the practical applications,

which made the aspect of civilization in 1900 differ in a thousand ways from what it had been in 1801. He names a dozen of these practical applications: railways, steam navigation, the electric telegraph, the telephone, friction-matches, gas-lighting, electric lighting, the photograph, the Roentgen rays, spectrum analysis, anesthetics, and antiseptics. It is with pride that an American can check off not a few of these utilities as being due wholly or in large part to the ingenuity of one or another of his countrymen.

But his pride has a fall when Wallace draws up a second list not of mere inventions but of those fundamental discoveries, of those fecundating theories underlying all practical applications and making them possible, of those principles "which have extended our knowledge or widened our conceptions of the universe." Of these he catalogs twelve; and we are pained to find that no American has had an important share in the establishment of any of these broad generalizations. He may have added a little here and there; but no single one of all the twelve discoveries is mainly to be credited to any American. It seems as if our French critic was not so far out when he asserted that we were "terribly practical." In the application of principles, in the devising of new methods, our share was larger than that of any other nation. In the

working out of the stimulating principles themselves, our share was less than "a younger brother's portion."

It is only fair to say, however, that even tho we may not have brought forth a chief leader of art or of science to adorn the wonderful century, there are other evidences of our practical sagacity than those set down by Wallace, evidences more favorable and of better augury for our future. We derived our language and our laws, our public justice and our representative government from our English ancestors, as we derived from the Dutch our religious toleration and perhaps also our large freedom of educational opportunity. In our time we have set an example to others and helpt along the progress of the world. President Eliot holds that we have made five important contributions to the advancement of civilization. First of all, we have done more than any other people to further peace-keeping, and to substitute legal arbitration for the brute conflict of war. Second, we have set a splendid example of the broadest religious toleration,—even tho Holland had first shown us how. Thirdly, we have made evident the wisdom of universal manhood suffrage. Fourthly, by our welcoming of new-comers from all parts of the earth, we have proved that men belonging to a great variety of races are fit for

political freedom. Finally, we have succeeded in diffusing material well-being among the whole population to an extent without parallel in any other country in the world.

These five American contributions to civilization are all of them the result of the practical side of the American character. They may even seem commonplace as compared with the conquering exploits of some other races. But they are more than merely practical; they are all essentially moral. As President Eliot insists, they are "triumphs of reason, enterprize, courage, faith and justice over passion, selfishness, inertness, timidity, and distrust. Beneath each of these developments there lies a strong ethical sentiment, a strenuous moral and social purpose. It is for such work that multitudinous democracies are fit."

IV

A "STRONG ethical sentiment," and a "strenuous moral purpose" cannot flourish unless they are deeply rooted to idealism. And here we find an adequate answer to the third assertion of Tolstoi's visitor, who maintained that we are "hostile to all idealism." Our idealism may be of a practical sort, but it is idealism none the less. Emerson was an idealist, altho he

was also a thrifty Yankee. Lincoln was an idealist, even if he was also a practical politician, an opportunist, knowing where he wanted to go, but never crossing a bridge before he came to it. Emerson and Lincoln had ever a firm grip on the facts of life; each of them kept his gaze fixt on the stars,—and he also kept his feet firm on the soil.

There is a sham idealism, boastful and shabby, which stares at the moon and stumbles in the mud, as Shelley and Poe stumbled. But the basis of the highest genius is always a broad common sense. Shakspere and Molière were held in esteem by their comrades for their understanding of affairs; and they each of them had money out at interest. Sophocles was entrusted with command in battle; and Goethe was the shrewdest of the Grand Duke's counselors. The idealism of Shakspere and of Molière, of Sophocles and of Goethe, is like that of Emerson and of Lincoln; it is unfailingly practical. And thereby it is sharply set apart from the aristocratic idealism of Plato and of Renan, of Ruskin and of Nietzsche, which is founded on obvious self-esteem and which is sustained by arrogant and inexhaustible egotism. True idealism is not only practical, it is also liberal and tolerant.

Perhaps it might seem to be claiming too

much to insist on certain points of similarity between us and the Greeks of old. The points of dissimilarity are only too evident to most of us; and yet there is a likeness as well as an unlikeness. Professor Butcher has recently asserted that "no people was ever less detacht from the practical affairs of life" than the Greeks, "less insensible to outward utility; yet they regarded prosperity as a means, never as an end. The unquiet spirit of gain did not take possession of their souls. Shrewd traders and merchants, they were yet idealists. They did not lose sight of the higher and distinctively human aims which give life its significance." It will be well for us if this can be said of our civilization two thousand years after its day is done; and it is for us to make sure that "the unquiet spirit of gain" shall not take possession of our souls. It is for us also to rise to the attitude of the Greeks, among whom, as Professor Butcher points out, "money lavisht on personal enjoyment was counted vulgar, oriental, inhuman."

There is comfort in the memory of Lincoln and of those whose death on the field of Gettysburg he commemorated. The men who there gave up their lives that the country might live, had answered to the call of patriotism, which is one of the sublimest images of idealism. There is comfort also in the recollection of Emerson,

and in the fact that for many of the middle years of the nineteenth century he was the most popular of lecturers, with an unfading attractiveness to the plain people, perhaps, because, in Lowell's fine phrase, he "kept constantly burning the beacon of an ideal life above the lower region of turmoil." There is comfort again in the knowledge that idealism is one manifestation of imagination, and that imagination itself is but an intenser form of energy. That we have energy and to spare, no one denies; and we may reckon him a nearsighted observer who does not see also that we have our full share of imagination, even tho it has not yet exprest itself in the loftiest regions of art and of science. The outlook is hopeful, and it is not true that

> We, like sentries are obliged to stand
> In starless nights and wait the appointed hour.

The foundations of our commonwealth were laid by the sturdy Elizabethans who bore across the ocean with them their portion of that imagination which in England flamed up in rugged prose and in superb and soaring verse. In two centuries and a half the sons of these stalwart Englishmen have lost nothing of their ability to see visions and to dream dreams, and to put solid foundations under their castles in the air. The flame may seem to die down for a season,

but it springs again from the embers most unexpectedly, as it broke forth furiously in 1861. There was imagination at the core of the little war for the freeing of Cuba,—the very attack on Spain, which the Parisian journalist cited to Tolstoi as the proof of our predatory aggressiveness. We said that we were going to war for the sake of the ill-used people in the suffering island close to our shores; we said that we would not annex Cuba; we did the fighting that was needful;—and we kept our word. It is hard to see how even the most bitter of critics can discover in this anything selfish.

There was imagination also in the sudden stopping of all the steamcraft, of all the railroads, of all the street-cars, of all the incessant traffic of the whole nation, at the moment when the body of a murdered chief magistrate was lowered into the grave. This pause in the work of the world was not only touching, it had a large significance to any one seeking to understand the people of these United States. It was a testimony that the Greeks would have appreciated; it had the bold simplicity of an Attic inscription. And we would thrill again in sympathetic response if it was in the pages of Plutarch that we read the record of another instance: When the time arrived for Admiral Sampson to surrender the command of the

fleet he had brought back to Hampton Roads, he came on deck to meet there only those officers whose prescribed duty required them to take part in the farewell ceremonies as set forth in the regulations. But when he went over the side of the flagship he found that the boat which was to bear him ashore was manned by the rest of the officers, ready to row him themselves and eager to render this last personal service; and then from every other ship of the fleet there put out a boat also manned by officers, to escort for the last time the commander whom they loved and honored.

V

As another illustration of our regard for the finer and loftier aspects of life, consider our parks, set apart for the use of the people by the city, the state and the nation. In the cities of this new country the public playgrounds have had to be made, the most of them, and at high cost,—whereas the towns of the Old World have come into possession of theirs for nothing, more often than not inheriting the private recreation-grounds of their rulers. And Europe has little or nothing to show similar either to the reservations of certain states, like the steadily enlarging preserves in the Catskills and the Adirondacks,

or to the ampler national parks, the Yellowstone, the Yosemite and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, some of them far larger in area than one at least of the original thirteen states. Overcoming the pressure of private greed, the people have ordained the preservation of this natural beauty and its protection for all time under the safe guardianship of the nation and with free access to all who may claim admission to enjoy it.

In like manner many of the battlefields, whereon the nation spent its blood that it might be what it is and what it hopes to be,—these have been taken over by the nation itself and set apart and kept as holy places of pilgrimage. They are free from the despoiling hand of any individual owner. They are adorned with monuments recording the brave deeds of the men who fought there. They serve as constant reminders of the duty we owe to our country and of the debt we owe to those who made it and who saved it for us. And the loyal veneration with which these fields of blood have been cherisht here in the United States finds no counterpart in any country in Europe, no matter how glorious may be its annals of military prowess. Even Waterloo is in private hands; and its broad acres, enricht by the bones of thousands, are tilled every year by the industrious Belgian farmers. Yet it was a Frenchman, Renan, who told us that what

welds men into a nation, is "the memory of great deeds done in common and the will to accomplish yet more."

According to the theory of the conservation of energy, there ought to be about as much virtue in the world at one time as at another. According to the theory of the survival of the fittest, there ought to be a little more now than there was a century ago. We Americans to-day have our faults, and they are abundant enough and blatant enough, and foreigners take care that we shall not overlook them; but our ethical standard—however imperfectly we may attain to it—is higher than that of the Greeks under Pericles, of the Romans under Cæsar, of the English under Elizabeth. It is higher even than that of our forefathers who establisht our freedom, as those know best who have most carefully inquired into the inner history of the American Revolution. In nothing was our advance more striking than in the different treatment meted out to the vanquisht after the Revolution and after the Civil War. When we made our peace with the British the native tories were proscribed, and thousands of loyalists left the United States to carry into Canada the indurated hatred of the exiled. But after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, no body of men, no single man indeed, was driven forth

to live an alien for the rest of his days; even tho a few might choose to go, none were compelled.

This change of conduct on the part of those who were victors in the struggle was evidence of an increasing sympathy. Not only is sectionalism disappearing, but with it is departing the feeling that really underlies it,—the distrust of those who dwell elsewhere than where we do. This distrust is common all over Europe today. Here in America it has yielded to a friendly neighborliness which makes the family from Portland, Maine, soon find itself at home in Portland, Oregon. It is getting hard for us to hate anybody,—especially since we have disestablisht the devil. We are good-natured and easy-going; Herbert Spencer even denounced this as our immediate danger, maintaining that we were too good-natured, too easy-going, too tolerant of evil; and he insisted that we needed to strengthen our wills to protest against wrong, to wrestle with it resolutely, and to overcome it before it is firmly rooted.

VI

We are kindly and we are helpful; and we are fixt in the belief that somehow everything will work out all right in the long run. But nothing will work out all right unless we so make it

work; and excessive optimism may be as corrupting to the fiber of the people as "the Sabbathless pursuit of fortune," as Bacon termed it. When Mr. John Morley was last in this country he seized swiftly upon a chance allusion of mine to this ingrained hopefulness of ours. "Ah, what you call optimism," he cried, "I call fatalism." But an optimism which is solidly based on a survey of the facts cannot fairly be termed fatalism; and another British student of political science, Mr. James Bryce, has recently pointed out that the intelligent native American has—and by experience is justified in having—a firm conviction that the majority of qualified voters are pretty sure to be right.

Then he suggested a reason for the faith that is in us, when he declared that no such feeling exists in Europe, since in Germany the governing class dreads the spread of socialism, in France the republicans know that it is not impossible that Monarchism and Clericalism may succeed in upsetting the Republic, while in Great Britain each party believes that the other party, when it succeeds, succeeds by misleading the people, and neither party supposes that the majority are any more likely to be right than to be wrong.

Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce were both here in the United States in the fall of 1904, when we

were in the midst of a presidential election, one of those prolonged national debates, creating incessant commotion, but invaluable agents of our political education, in so far as they force us all to take thought about the underlying principles of policy, by which we wish to see the government guided. It was while this political campaign was at its height that the French visitor to the Russian novelist was setting his notes in order and copying out his assertion that we Americans were mere money-grubbers, "systematically hostile to all idealism." If this unthinking Parisian journalist had only taken the trouble to consider the addresses which the chief speakers of the two parties here in the United States were then making to their fellow-citizens in the hope of winning votes, he would have discovered that these practical politicians, trained to perceive the subtler shades of popular feeling, were founding all their arguments on the assumption that the American people as a whole wanted to do right. He would have seen that the appeal of these stalwart partisans was rarely to prejudice or to race-hatred,—evil spirits that various orators have sought to arouse and to intensify in the more recent political discussions of the French themselves.

An examination of the platforms, of the letters of the candidates, and of the speeches of the

more important leaders on both sides revealed to an American observer the significant fact that "each party tried to demonstrate that it was more peaceable, more equitable, more sincerely devoted to lawful and righteous behavior than the other;" and "the voter was instinctively credited with loving peace and righteousness, and with being stirred by sentiments of good-will toward men." This seems to show that the heart of the people is sound, and that it does not throb in response to ignoble appeals. It seems to show that there is here the desire ever to do right and to see right done, even if the will is weakened a little by easy-going good-nature, and even if the will fails at times to stiffen itself resolutely to make sure that the right shall prevail.

"Liberty hath a sharp and double edge fit only to be handled by just and virtuous men," so Milton asserted long ago, adding that "to the bad and dissolute, it becomes a mischief unwieldy in their own hands." Even if we Americans can clear ourselves of being "bad and dissolute," we have much to do before we may claim to be "just and virtuous." Justice and virtue are not to be had for the asking; they are the rewards of a manful contest with selfishness and with sloth. They are the results of an honest effort to think straight, and to apply eternal principles to present needs.

Merely to feel is only the beginning; what remains is to think and to act.

A British historian, Mr. Frederic Harrison, who came here to spy out the land three or four years before Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce last visited us, was struck by the fact — and by the many consequences of the fact—that "America is the only land on earth where caste has never had a footing, nor has left a trace." It seemed to him that "vast numbers and the passion of equality tend to low averages in thought, in manners, and in public opinion, which the zeal of the devoted minority tends gradually to raise to higher planes of thought and conduct." He believed that we should solve our problems one by one because "the zeal for learning, justice and humanity" lies deep in the American heart. Mr. Harrison did not say it in so many words, but it is implied in what he did say, that the absence of caste and the presence of low averages in thought, in manners, and in public opinion, impose a heavier task on the devoted minority, whose duty it is to keep alive the zeal for learning, justice and humanity.

Which of us, if haply the spirit moves him, may not elect himself to this devoted minority? Why should not we also, each in our own way, without pretence, without boastfulness, without

bullying, do whatsoever in us lies for the attainment of justice and of virtue? It is well to be a gentleman and a scholar; but after all it is best to be a man, ready to do a man's work in the world. And indeed there is no reason why a gentleman and a scholar should not also be a man. He will need to cherish what Huxley called "that enthusiasm for truth, that fanaticism for veracity, which is a greater possession than much learning, a nobler gift than the power of increasing knowledge." He will need also to remember that

> Kings have their dynasties,—but not the mind;
> Cæsar leaves other Cæsars to succeed,
> But Wisdom, dying, leaves no heir behind.

(1905.)

THE AMERICANS AND THE BRITISH

THE AMERICANS AND THE BRITISH

MANY of those who take an interest in observing social complexities must have noticed a curious divergence in the opinions held by the French and by the British about the people of the United States. Reasoning from certain of the obvious facts the French come to one conclusion, and reasoning from other facts equally obvious the British have arrived at an opinion almost diametrically opposite. The French, recalling the Spanish settlements in the South and their own exploration of the Mississippi Valley in the eighteenth century, and observing the immense immigration from Germany and from Scandinavia in the nineteenth, are inclined to think of the United States as populated by a chance conglomeration of unrelated human beings with no unity of tradition and with no common core of ideals. The British, on the other hand, knowing that the beginnings of the United States are to be found partly in New England and partly in Virginia, and seeing that we speak the English language and have transplanted the common law of England, are unable to conceive of us as anything but English.

The theory of the French seems to be shared by most of the other Latin nations, as we had occasion to discover at the outbreak of our little war with Spain. Apparently the Latins, all of them, Italians as well as French and Spanish, looked upon the inhabitants of the United States as a motley horde of mongrels with no pride of nationality and with no cohesive interests; and they held therefore that we were likely to be defeated easily by the pureblooded population of the Iberian peninsula. Of course, the educated man of the Latin races would have had to admit—if the question had been forced on his attention—that the Spanish were not really a pureblooded stock; and if he was pusht to the wall the further confession might have been wrung from him that there are now no nationalities having a right to pride themselves on purity of descent,—the Spanish, perhaps, the least of all, since their land had been held in turn by the Celts and by the Romans, by the Goths and Vandals, and even by the Arab invaders from Africa. What is more, the educated man of the Latin countries is well aware that inbreeding is debilitating to a nation and that there is reinvigoration and new life in the commingling of varied human stocks.

The theory held by the British is exactly the opposite of that held by the French. It is exem-

plified in the essay written about us by Matthew Arnold a quarter of a century ago, before he paid his first visit to this country. His assumption was that the Americans were at bottom expatriated Englishmen, modified only a little by the passage across the Atlantic. The scholarly British critic had often declared that the inhabitants of Great Britain could be sharply distinguisht into an upper class, a middle class, and a lower class; and he seems to have assumed that as we had no upper class and no lower class, the American people were therefore the counterparts of the British middle class, no more and no less. The extent of Matthew Arnold's blunder in regard to us, as a result of his initial assumption of this identity between the British and the Americans, can be gaged best by recalling his own characterization of the several classes in England,—"an aristocracy materialized and null, a middle class purblind and hideous, a lower class crude and brutal." In his later writings there is some evidence that he began to suspect that his assumption was not as indisputable as he had supposed. But it is a fallacy which lurks in the opinions of nearly all British critics who have occasion to talk about us and which often endures even after they have paid us the obligatory visit. As Mr. Howells has suggested with his customary acuteness, the British fail to under-

stand us chiefly "because they can never understand that we are not still a sort of Englishmen-in-error, who would be willingly set right if we could without too great publicity."

Perhaps it is because the British have ever accepted us as closely akin to themselves that they have been free with the searching reproofs which are not uncommon in the strict privacy of the family circle. Even when their intentions are most kindly, they permit us to perceive that they suppose us to be sorry for our separation. Even when they are broad-minded enough to see that we were right in 1776 and that their own rulers were wrong, even when they are acute enough to feel that we were then really fighting the battles of liberalism and making possible more swiftly the full freedom they themselves now enjoy, even when they have attained to this wisdom, they are inclined nevertheless to deplore the separation itself. It is very hard indeed for them to understand that the independence of the United States seems to us the beginning of a new era, and that we simply cannot conceive of ourselves as still subjects of a king, even if we know that a constitutional monarchy such as exists in Great Britain conserves to the individual perhaps as much of the essence of liberty as our own democratic republic.

They would be surprized to discover that some

of us, revering Washington as the Father of His Country, are ready also with a grateful regard for George III, as a sort of Stepfather of the United States,—since we might not have been stirred to independence if that able monarch had not been as arbitrary as he was and as obstinate. They are therefore capable, in all kindness, of suggesting a reunion of the United States with the United Kingdom, such as Lord Rosebery proposed as a consummation to be striven for in the future. And here at once we catch a glimpse of the gulf that yawns between a British subject and an American citizen. It was with the utmost good will toward America that the former British prime-minister was moved to make this suggestion, never suspecting that to an American what he proposed was simply unthinkable. However cordial toward the British the feelings of an American may be, he never regrets the Revolution, and he never wishes to undo its results. Not only does he never desire to turn back the clock of Time, but the possibility of such a step is not present in his mind. He would reject it instantly if it happened to occur to him;—but then this never does happen. He would refuse to take the proposal seriously, if any well-meaning Englishman should insist on discussing it. He feels instinctively that there was no price too high to pay for certain of the

results of the American Revolution. He would accept as a matter of course the statement made by Mr. Howells after Lord Rosebery had lookt forward to a possible political reunion of the two nations that speak English:—"Simply to have thrown down and cast out their fetish of personal loyalty, denied their grotesque idolatry of sovereign-worship, not to mention getting rid of a titled aristocracy and a state-church, is worth all that our seven years' struggle for independence cost us."

Here indeed is the real line of cleavage between the two great empires that possess the English language as a birthright. The presence of a personal sovereign is the outward and visible sign that caste is still supreme in the British Empire. The external abuses of the feudal system have been abolished in Great Britain, one by one, until those that still linger are almost harmless; but the inner spirit survives to this late day and even now its manifestations are abundant in almost every part of the social structure of the British Isles. There is still alive the fiction that the king rules, and that the army of the empire is His Majesty's army. There is still a willing acceptance of a titled aristocracy, and also of an upper house the vast majority of whose members sit there by the right of birth merely, without regard to their individual merits.

No doubt the British people could change these things, speedily and without violence, if they really desired to get rid of this inheritance from feudalism. But they have not got rid of it; and this is evidence enough that they do not wish to do so. The British see no reason to abolish a state of affairs which the American people look at with amazed wonder as a survival of the Dark Ages. A native American finds it wholly impossible to understand the mental attitude of a certain man of letters in London, who justified his ingrained Toryism by the assertion that he simply would not be ruled by his equals.

We Americans care less for the opinion of foreigners about us than we did before the Civil War revealed to us our own strength. We know that the French view, that we are only a motley horde of the sweepings of Europe, is absurd. We see also that the British assumption in regard to us, that we are only "Englishmen-in-error," when once we have come to understand it, is equally absurd. And yet the British are our "kin across the sea," and "blood is thicker than water," and we are also "the subjects of King Shakspere," and we have the same language for our mother-tongue. In politics, in public morals and in private morals, in our attitude toward the most of the pressing questions of the day, we are far more closely related to the British than we are

either to the French or to the Germans, however much we may have profited by the labors of the leading minds of France and of Germany. Yet we have cast out the last vestiges of the feudal system of which the British are still preserving at least the empty shell; and we have absorbed not only millions of men from continental Europe but also many of the ideas of continental Europe which have not appealed to the British. In most matters of the highest importance we are very like the British; but in some matters of high importance we are very unlike them.

Perhaps we may be aided in the attempt to distinguish between the British and the Americans if we begin by an attempt to set forth the more salient differences between the French people and the two peoples that speak English. The most obvious distinction is that the people which speaks French, having inherited from the Celts a hatred of hypocrisy, are inclined to boast of their vices, whereas the peoples which speak English are wont to boast of their virtues,—and often with as little warrant. Then, furthermore, the French are a logical race, intelligent, orderly in their mental processes, clear-minded and thorogoing; they are inclined to be radicals in the application of any theory which has captivated their intellect. The British and the Americans are less intelligent, and less logical; they are

rarely radical or merely theoretical; they are prone to be practical, to be opportunists. The language which the French speak, which they have made what it is and which represents and reveals their characteristics, is clear, sharp, precise, exact; and as a result it is unpoetic and hostile to all vague suggestion or mysticism. On the other hand, the English language is large, loose, free, energetic, vigorous, like the two peoples whose mother-tongue it is. French is seen at its best in prose, whereas English is supreme in poetry. English tragedy is, on the whole, far superior to English comedy, whereas French comedy is, on the whole, far superior to French tragedy. There is obvious significance in the fact that the greatest name in the history of French dramatic literature is that of Molière, the melancholy man who is the master of comedy, while the greatest name in the history of English dramatic literature is that of Shakspere, a humorist also it is true, but above all others the master of tragedy.

Moreover, the chief characteristic of the two peoples that speak English is individuality, whereas the French are governed by the social instinct. The individual Frenchman is likely to lack initiative ; he does not expect to think for himself or to act for himself; he looks to tradition and to the social organism to tell him what

to do. The individual Anglo-Saxon has a superabundance of initiative; he is like the smith in Scott's story, he "fights for his own hand." In French society the unit is the family; and in Great Britain and the United States it is the individual. An Englishman or an American marries to please himself; but a Frenchman, even if he strives to please himself in his marriage, seeks also not to displease his parents and his relatives. In England and in America a wedding unites two individuals; in France it unites two families. Among the peoples that speak English it is almost impossible to conceive of a strong man acting on the motive which governed the Duke of Saint Simon in the days of Louis XIV when he declined to wed an orphan, because he did not wish to be without the social support of a father-in-law.

While the social instinct which governs the French insistently is far less potent among the English-speaking peoples, its workings are more in evidence in the United States than in Great Britain. For one example only,—the Englishman likes to build about his suburban acre a brick wall tipt with broken glass, whereas the American often does not put even a wire fence or a low hedge about his home, but lets his grounds run into those of his neighbor indistinguishably. Among the British we find individualism running over into eccentricity often. It was one of

the shrewdest British observers, Walter Bagehot, who askt whether the inhabitants of the United Kingdom were not "above all other nations divided from the rest of the world, insular both in situation and in mind." It was a German philosopher, Novalis, who declared a century earlier that "every Englishman is an island." No doubt this insularity has its advantages; it leads to an undoubting pride and to an imperturbability of temper, that may be sources of strength to a nation, stiffening its self-reliance. But the disadvantages are indisputable also; and we Americans need not regret that we are less insular than our kin across the sea. We seem to be a little more hospitable to ideas from other countries; we are apparently more responsive to the social appeal; we are a little more sympathetic and perhaps a little less self-sufficient. Even if we are to the full as conceited, we are somewhat more willing to learn from others.

The ingenious French philosopher, M. Le Bon, commenting on the motto of the Revolution, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," declared that the real difference between the French and the British lay in the fact that the French were enamored of Equality and cared little for Liberty, while the British insisted on Liberty and never gave a thought to Equality. And when I once quoted this to Mr. Rudyard Kipling, he instantly

added his own comment to the effect that what the American really preferred was Fraternity;—"He is a good fellow himself, and he expects you to be one." This spontaneous suggestion seems to be a recognition that friendliness, a regard for one's fellow creatures,—the social instinct, in short,—may be more often lookt for among us Americans than among our British cousins.

The liking for liberty, the excessive individuality, the habit of fighting for his own hand, all tend to develop in the British a certain hardness. Two centuries ago the 'Plaindealer' of Wycherley was a popular play, its hero being sympathetic to British audiences; and *Manly* is frankly brutal in word and deed. The same desire to give pain is visible in the long history of British literary criticism, from Gosson's 'School of Abuse' to Pope's 'Dunciad' and from the quarterly reviewers of a century ago to the violent vulgarity of the *Saturday Review* to-day.

In this, as in not a few other aspects, Doctor Johnson is typical of the less pleasant qualities of his race; he was a broad-shouldered brute, arrogant and offensive and ever ready to trample on anybody who was weaker than himself. It is characteristic of him that he was proud of the letter he wrote to his friend and benefactress, Mrs. Thrale, on her second marriage,—a letter

absolutely indefensible, ungrateful and ungentlemanly, coarse and rough, and above all carefully phrased to convey the utmost of insult to a woman from whom he had received only kindness. Contrast Johnson with Franklin, his urbane American contemporary, who is quite as typically a man of the eighteenth century. Or in the nineteenth century again contrast the scolding Carlyle with the gentle Emerson. Carlyle is a burly bully, a peasant with genius, malignantly envious of all the rival authors of his time and ever ready to pour out his scorn on his betters. Emerson is a gentleman, low-voiced, courteous and kindly, and yet stalwart in his sturdy manliness.

The French proverb tells us that every man has the qualities of his faults and the faults of his qualities; and what is true of the individual is no less true of the race. In other words, the fault is often only the excess of the quality; and it is impossible to deny that there are certain compensating advantages to be found in this least agreeable characteristic of the British. It seems to be responsible in part for their steady insistence on their rights and for their refusal to be overridden. Their devotion to liberty and their excessive individualism have made them far swifter to denounce abuses than the more sympathetic and more tolerant Americans.

The chronic protester is not a pleasant person-

ality; but he performs a most useful function; he is the watch-dog of liberty,—the price of which is eternal vigilance. The kindliness and the social feeling of the Americans tend to make them shrink from protest against trifling abuses and unimportant infringements of public rights. The individuality of the British, on the other hand, their bull-headed harshness, tend to make an act of protest congenial to them. Before a petty infraction of right the long-suffering Americans are inclined to submit with a laugh, admitting that the joke is on them, whereas the British fail to see the joke and rise up in their wrath. They refuse to pay an overcharge; and if they are compelled by circumstances, they appeal the case, —or they write to the *Times*. And when enough letters have been written to the *Times*, public opinion is aroused at last; and then the matter is quickly settled. If the hotels of Europe are now cleaner than they were half a century ago, with larger towels and wash-basins, with better sanitary conveniences, our thanks are due to two generations of travelers from the British Isles who were unceasing in complaint whenever they failed to find what they wanted and when they did find what they did not want.

So far we have seen that the Americans differ from the British, first and foremost in that we have ever been free from feudalism which

still keeps alive in the British Isles the caste system and the pervading snobbishness that necessarily accompanies it; and, second, that our individualism is more restrained than theirs by the social instinct. Perhaps this last difference is due in part at least to the commingling here of many other stocks than the Anglo-Saxon, even if the Anglo-Saxon stock still supplies the social framework. As Walt Whitman wrote on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city of Santa Fé—older than any of the towns first settled by the English—we have been inclined "tacitly to abandon ourselves to the notion that our United States have been fashioned from the British Isles only, and essentially form a second England only;" and the poet added that "many leading traits of our future national personality, and some of the best ones, will certainly prove to have originated from other than British stock." It is not without significance that the most distinguisht of American painters and the most prominent of American sculptors are both of them of French descent, La Farge and Saint-Gaudens, and that perhaps the most popular of American composers is of Portuguese descent, Sousa.

If we Americans were of a purely British stock, we should not be what we are—at least if we may judge by the record of the Australians, who have

accomplisht nothing as yet in literature or in art or in science. The Australians are now more in number than we were when we separated ourselves from Great Britain; and yet they have not produced a single man of eminence. Indeed, it may be doubted whether one American in ten can mention the name of a single native Australian or has ever read a single volume by a native Australian author. The Australians seem to afford an extreme example of the disadvantages of inbreeding, whereas we Americans reveal the advantages of a commingling of stocks, which has quickened our sluggish British blood.

We have not only been swift to assimilate the foreigner himself, we have also been receptive to foreign ideas. In his 'Remarks on a National Literature,' published four score years ago, Channing urged Americans to study French and German to get out of narrowly British influence. It is well to remember that the Transcendental movement had its origin, not in Great Britain, but in Germany, and also that the later American novelists, especially Mr. Howells and Mr. James, sought their models, not in Great Britain, but in France or in Russia. More or less complete translations of Balzac, of Turgenef, and of Tolstoi, were undertaken in the United States long before a like effort was made in the British Isles. American painters (even tho they may

sometimes settle in London to sell their pictures) are likely to go to Paris to learn the technic of their craft; and if architecture is to-day a living art in the United States with a host of ardent practitioners wrestling new problems as best they can, one reason may be found in the training and in the stimulus which returning students have brought back from Paris. And as the American goes to France for instruction in art, so he goes to Germany for training in science. It is not at Oxford or at Cambridge that the graduates of our American colleges matriculate, when they wish to pursue their studies further, but at Berlin and at the other German universities. If a number of American students are now at Oxford on Rhodes scholarships this is simply because they have been paid to go there; and the result of their studying there is still highly problematic.

Perhaps it is to be credited to the influence of Paris and Berlin,—altho it may be due from freedom from caste and to relaxing of insularity,—but whatever the cause there is a wide difference between the attitude of the American public toward art and science and the attitude of the British public. Here is where Matthew Arnold's mistake is most obvious and here is where the gulf is widest between the American people and the British middle class. We have defects of our

own, but they are not the special defects of the British middle class. Of course, a Philistine is a Philistine the world over; he sets up the gates of Gath wherever he goes, and he worships Baal no less in the new world than in the old. But none the less is the American Philistine quite unlike the British Philistine whom Arnold detested and denounced. The American Philistine may not see the light any more clearly than his British cousin, but he is willing enough to accept it when it is revealed to him. He may be ignorant but he is not hostile. Now, if we can believe Arnold himself, the British Philistine is forever sinning against light, shutting his eyes to it and despising it.

As an evidence of this difference, take the consideration paid to education in Great Britain and in the United States. Here the whole public is interested in education, and believes in it, and is willing to be taxt for it. There the public seems to be profoundly uninterested, except in so far as education intertwines itself with sectarian strife and becomes an issue in partisan politics. The one note which recurs again and again in the reports of the Mosely Educational Commissioners is that of surprize at the esteem in which education was held in America; and in private conversation the members of that commission often declared that nothing of the sort

could be said about England. In Great Britain there is not even now anything that can properly be called an educational system; and practical men seem to care little for thoroness of training.

A friend of mine in London told me a few years ago that his son was to be an engineer, going straight from Eton into the works of a firm of world-wide reputation. I askt if the lad was not to study at all in any technical school; and the father answered that the managers of the works preferred to take him untaught and break him in themselves. This hostility of practical men in Great Britain toward scientific preparation is significant; it seems to imply either a narrowness of outlook on the part of the managers of the works, or else hidden deficiencies on the part of the technological schools. Here in the United States the entire graduating class of a technological school is often engaged in advance by a single company. The British seem to exalt the practical far above the theoretical, and even to feel a certain contempt for the latter. We Americans strive to unite the two as best we can, knowing by experience that the man of scientific education can always sooner or later pick up for himself the practice of the shop, whereas the man with only a shop-training will be heavily handicapt when he may later seek to attain to the higher levels of his profession. We cannot re-

frain from wondering sometimes if the British practicality and dislike of logic is not carried a little too far and if they are not inclined to think the acceptance of theory too high a price to pay for efficiency.

A score of years ago Colonel Higginson suggested that the American had "an added drop more of nervous fluid" than an Englishman; and Matthew Arnold pickt out the saying as an unfortunate instance of American boastfulness, whereupon Colonel Higginson promptly retorted that it was not a boast at all, but a plain statement of a fact, which might be either fortunate or unfortunate, as the future should determine. It is easy to conceive of circumstances in which the possession of "an added drop more of nervous fluid" might be a serious disadvantage. It is, of course, easier still to see that it is more likely to be an advantage. But no one competent to express an opinion will contradict Colonel Higginson's assertion and deny that the American has "an added drop more of nervous fluid" than the Englishman, whether this is likely to prove a bane or a boon. That keen student of social characteristics, Walter Bagehot, would have insisted unhesitatingly that it was a bane, for he always maintained that the successful working of the British constitution, with its legal fictions and its hollow shams of all sorts,

was possible only because the British people as a whole was slow and stolid.

To our possession of the added drop Colonel Higginson ascribed our "specific levity," the lightness of touch to be noted in our literature. He pointed out that even in literary criticism the British seemed to consider boxing as the only manly art and to scorn the more adroit methods of the fencer. "It is a curious fact," so he declared, "that as the best American manners incline to the French, and not the English model, so the tendency of American literary style is to the finer methods, quicker repartees, and more delicate turns" of the Parisian masters of fence. If this is admitted the cause is to be sought not only in conscious acceptance of French standards in these matters, but also in the American avoidance of British harshness, in the relaxing of insularity and in the readier response to the social instinct. Here again the examples that recur to the mind at once are Carlyle and Emerson, the one growling and destructive, the other courteous and stimulating. Perhaps this superior refinement, most unexpected in a country of pioneers, is the result of the "added drop of nervous fluid"; and perhaps, like that drop, it may be a possession for which we shall have to pay sooner or later.

The "specific levity" which the American often has, and which his British cousin is far less likely

to have, assumes various disguises. It masquerades as the "American joke," which the foreigner fails to take. It underlies the American sense-of-humor, which is so portentous and so baffling to the foreigner. It is an element in the good humor which accounts for the tolerance and the sympathy that observant travelers from Europe are swift to perceive. It sustains that omnipresent optimism which is one of the recognized characteristics of the American—and which is almost wholly lacking in our kin across the sea. It may even be accountable in some measure for the friendliness of our social intercourse and for our casual confidence in our fellow-man.

Altho undue introspection may be as unwholesome for a nation as it is for an individual, yet it is well that we should try to discover the reasons for the opinions which foreigners hold of us. It is well that we should take stock of ourselves from time to time, casting up our accounts and charging up to profit and loss on the balance-sheet of the race. Of course, we must admit in advance that any conclusion we may arrive at is but temporary whether it concerns our neighbors or ourselves. Professor William James has declared—he is speaking of religion, but what he says is as true in other fields of human interest—"that the safe thing is surely to recognize that all the insights of creatures of a day like ourselves

must be provisional. The wisest of critics is an altering being, subject to the better insight of the morrow, and right at any moment only 'up to date' and 'on the whole.'"

There is a double difficulty in comparing the characteristics of two nationalities, due to the fact that they are both of them in constant process of modification,—a process more evident and more rapid here in the United States, but still obvious enough in Great Britain. Altho the English-speaking race is mainly of Teutonic origin, it has been subjected to all sorts of influences in the long centuries before the American Revolution and in the century and a third since that fortunate event, until it is now no longer easy for the two peoples that compose it always to understand one another as it is so needful that they should, for the best interests of both. Using the same language, inheriting the same law, ruled by the same political traditions, they are alike and unlike; and perhaps the final word in regard to their relation to each other was written many years ago by that historian of the 'Winning of the West,' who is now the President of the United States and who declared in his first volume that "Americans belong to the English race only in the sense in which Englishmen belong to the German."

(1905.)

"BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER"

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ANY one who considers curiously the shifting international relations of the past hundred years is likely to find not a few interesting facts. He will note that Austria, which was the sole enemy of Italy thruout the most of the nineteenth century, was the ally of Italy in the final years of that period. He will remark that Russia, attackt twice by France, once under Napoleon I and again under Napoleon III, was the sole ally of the Third Republic at the end of the nineteenth century. He will observe that the French and the English, foes for five hundred years, fought side by side in the Crimean war, and that thereafter they speedily resumed their former attitude of mutual suspicion. And finally he will have to record that the United States, having had only three European wars in its century and a quarter of independent existence, seemed to have no friend among the nations of the world when it entered upon the third of these wars, that against Spain, except Great Britain against which it had waged the two others, and with which it had been again on the very verge of war less than forty years earlier. Perhaps in the future no event

that happened at the end of the nineteenth century will seem more significant than the growth of friendly feeling between the two peoples who speak the English language and who were separated violently in the eighteenth century.

Never before in the history of the world has the spectacle been seen of two great nations possessing the same language and inheriting the same political traditions. Never before has a colony, having achieved its independence, overtaken and surpast the mother-country, in size and in resources, in population and in power. Colonies have been able to set up for themselves, as a rule, only when the parent-nation was falling into its final weakness. But in the present case, the expansion of the British Empire, or at least a large part of this, has taken place since the United States declared their independence, and while they were also engaged in their own expansion. The political traditions of the English-speaking race have been transplanted in America without having been uprooted in the British Isles; and the stock has now two branches, both of them flourishing, one British and the other American. It was an English historian, the late John Richard Green, who declared more than a score of years ago that the future history of the English-speaking race was thereafter to be unrolled rather on the shores of the Hudson and

of the mighty Mississippi than by the banks of the Tweed and of the tiny Thames.

Nothing in the extraordinary nineteenth century is more extraordinary than the increase in the number of those who speak English, who are ruled by English law, and who cherish English political ideals. Probably it is not too much to say that the history of the twentieth century will be influenced more by the peoples who speak English than by the peoples who speak any other tongue. The course of events in the hundred years that lie before us will depend, in large measure, upon the British and the Americans, and more especially upon the greater or less cordiality which shall exist between the two nations. If Great Britain and the United States choose to act together they can work their will, for there is not likely to be built up any combination of nations able to withstand them. If they quarrel with each other and neutralize their combined weight, then it will not be so difficult for the other peoples to have their own way. Any attempt is interesting, therefore, to consider conscientiously the feelings of the British toward the Americans and of the Americans toward the British.

There is no need now to dwell at length on the points of likeness and of unlikeness discoverable between the British and the Americans, for these

we all know more or less accurately. But it may be well to note that the British do not understand these differences as clearly as we do. They are in the habit of saying that they do not look upon us Americans as foreigners; and their intent is obviously friendly, even tho the result may be dangerous. For if they do not consider us foreigners, how do they consider us? As kin across the sea?—in other words as moved by exactly the same motives and feelings as they are? Now, altho we Americans are far more closely related to the British than we are to the people of any other nationality, we are not at all British in our motives and our feelings. We are very far from being British; and it is the beginning of wisdom for the British themselves to understand this fundamental fact, once for all. They are so proud of being British that they do not perceive how any other people can fail to regret not being British; and out of kindness of heart they are willing to overlook our casual divergencies from British standards; they are ready to welcome us into the fold, from which we broke out a century and a quarter ago. They do not see that we base our pride on being American, that is to say on being not British; and they need to get it into their heads that we have not the slightest desire to be British. Herein we differ sharply from the Canadians and from

the other Colonials, who persist in calling Great Britain "home"—even tho they may never have set foot on the British Isles.

National pride is ever a source of national strength, however absurd it may seem to those who do not belong to that particular nation; and even national boastfulness may have some hidden advantage of its own. As Mr. Howells has pointed out, all the nations of the earth are guilty of the same self-praise:—"They all take credit to themselves nationally for virtues which belong rather sparingly to the whole of humanity; they speak of English fairness, and German honesty, and American independence, and they really make themselves believe that other peoples are destitute of the qualities which they severally arrogate to themselves. In the meantime the other nations affect to smile at a vanity which they could not imaginably indulge; but in fact they are only waiting their turn in the international scalp-dance to celebrate themselves with the same savage sincerity."

Until quite recently our attitude toward them, and their attitude toward us, was not unlike that of the Scotch engineer of the ocean-steamer toward the captain, when he said, "He's ma friend,—but I dinna like him!" Even now probably nothing would take the average Englishman more by surprize than to discover the

tolerant contempt with which he is regarded by the average American, as an old fogy,—or in our own expressive phrase—as a "back number." Probably also the average American would be equally astonisht if he should discover that the average Englishman is likely to consider him a little too sharp in business matters, too ready to indulge in what the British would call "Yankee tricks." But it is wholesome for each of them to perceive clearly the image of himself that is reflected in the eyes of the other. The ties of blood which bind the British and the Americans are disadvantageous in so far as they may lend to any disagreement the aspect of a family quarrel, bitterer always than any dispute between those who are wholly unrelated to each other. As George Eliot once suggested, only those near and dear to us know how to inflict the blow that hurts most.

It is scarcely a paradox to say that the possession of a common language has often been an obstacle to a better feeling between Great Britain and the United States, since it has insured a wider and a swifter diffusion of journalistic recrimination. It is not difficult for newspapers on either side of the Atlantic to throw stones; but one nation or the other may be called upon suddenly to pay for the broken windows. And not merely are the newspapers at fault, but also the men of letters, who cross the Atlantic and set down

the record of the things they have seen. What wandering Germans or French might write mattered little to us, but we were hurt by the unfriendly tone of British travelers, like Mrs. Trollope and Captain Marryat. We cared nothing about the adverse report of Maurice Sand, for example, while we resented the ungrateful caricaturing of Charles Dickens.

It may be admitted that we Americans were a little too thin-skinned half a century ago. But our British cousins were quite as touchy; they winced when Emerson etched their portraits in his austere study of 'English Traits'; and they cried out in great pain at certain innocent remarks of the gentle Hawthorne, altho the very title of his book on England—'Our Old Home'—was proof of the friendliness of his attitude. Their protests drew from Hawthorne a letter to his publisher in which he asserted that "the monstrosity of their self-conceit is such that any thing short of unlimited admiration impresses them as malicious caricature." Of course, the British are not peculiar in this self-conceit; we Americans have our full share also; in their turn the French and the Germans are as richly endowed with it; and now even the Japanese seem likely to acquire it. Quite possibly, indeed, a lack of this self-conceit might be evidence of some weakness in the fiber of the nation.

With every desire to hold the scales even, it is impossible not to feel that British travelers in the United States have been far more blameworthy than American travelers in Great Britain. There was a frank vulgarity in the books of Dickens, of Mrs. Trollope and of Captain Marryat, which finds no echo in the books of Irving, of Emerson and of Hawthorne. Consider how cordial is the appreciation of England in 'Bracebridge Hall'; and then recall the fact that in the 'Sketch-Book,' publisht more than four score years ago, the gracious Irving was moved to utter a warning that the offensive tone of British writers toward America was certain to work harm, in that it would tend to destroy the friendly feeling of the United States toward Great Britain, a friendliness of which the mother-country would assuredly feel the need in the future.

The warning was not heeded; and we can find the same contemptuous arrogance in several generations of British authors. It is obtruded in Sydney Smith's famous passage assuring us that nobody in Europe knew any American author, or painter or inventor. It is perceptible in Matthew Arnold's unfortunate remark that we Americans were reading the works of "a native author named Roe"—altho at that very moment the British were reading the works of a native author named Haggard, and the French

were reading the works of a native author named Ohnet. Difficult, indeed, is it for an Englishman not to assume the meridian of Greenwich as the basis of all measurements, literary no less than geographic. Courteous as Matthew Arnold was by nature, there are not a few passages in his several papers on America in which we are reminded of Thackeray's description of "that exceedingly impertinent and amusing demi-nod of recognition which is practised in England only, and only to perfection by university men,—and which seems to say, 'Confound you,—what do you do here?'"

This contemptuous arrogance of Great Britain toward the United States was sustained by a comprehensive ignorance. In the preface to the 'Pathfinder' Cooper records that when a man-of-war was to be built on Lake Ontario a hundred years ago, the British sent out frames and blocks, as tho there was no timber in Canada; and they provided also water-casks and all the requisite apparatus for distilling salt-water. And half a century later the wife of Hamilton Fish at dinner in London was asked by the wife of a British cabinet minister, what were the Great Lakes of America? "Of course, I know Wenham Lake," she added; "but what are the others?" Now, Wenham Lake is a pond somewhere in New England, the ice from which used

to be exported to England. Ignorance as deep-rooted as this is explicable only by a total lack of interest; and this ignorance the many volumes put forth by three generations of British travelers did little or nothing to clear away. Not until Mr. Bryce prepared his searching study of the American commonwealth was there publisht any book of British authorship which could help the writer's fellow-subjects to understand the citizens of the republic across the water.

While there was in Great Britain a contemptuous arrogance toward America sustained by an uninterested ignorance, there was in the United States, a state of feeling not so easy to define, since its elements were almost contradictory. There was a pride in the mother-country and a deference for the island-home of the race. There was a disappointment, constantly renewed, at the British failure to appreciate us, to encourage our youthful efforts, to understand us. There was also an inherited hostility toward the foe we had twice fought; and there was even a certain rancor toward the government which had imprest thousands of our seamen, which had wantonly burnt the Capitol at Washington, and which had wickedly let loose the redskins to scalp women and children along our borders.

In the schoolbooks of history placed in the hands of British boys, the two wars with the

United States are dismissed briefly, whereas the full succession of events is recorded at length in the schoolbooks placed in the hands of American boys. For a century every generation here grew up in the knowledge that the only European foe we had ever fought was Great Britain; and however impartially and dispassionately the facts might be presented, they spoke for themselves, and they did not speak in favor of the British. How much weight is to be attached to this tradition of hostility handed down from sire to son, it is difficult to declare; but there is no denying that it had a weight of its own. An inherited unfriendliness like this would be softened by time; and it would be softened also by the influence of English literature, which was ever at work, bringing home to us the kinship of the two peoples, if this benign influence had not been counteracted to some extent by the offensive attitude taken by many contemporary British authors, from Sydney Smith to Thomas Carlyle.

In fairness to the British, it must needs be noted that they could find not a little justification for their disparaging opinions in the bombastic boastfulness of many of our politicians and of many of our newspapers. Tall talk about manifest destiny was not fitted to win friends for us abroad, while at home it was certain to encourage foolish visions of conquest. As one who was a

schoolboy when the Civil War began, I can testify that we were wont to look at the map of North America with an unthinking wonder why the United States had not already gone down and conquered Mexico and gone up and captured Canada and the rest of British America. It was one of the indirect benefits of the Civil War, that our schoolboys are to-day free from these foolish visions. It was one of the accompanying evils of the Civil War that the unexpected attitude of Great Britain during the long years of that strenuous combat revived and intensified the hostility of the American people toward the British.

Only those who are now old enough to recall the outbreak of that bitter struggle, can know how sharp was our disappointment here at the conduct of our kin across the sea. There was commercial rivalry, no doubt, and there was international jealousy, of course; but, after all, and despite what we might say ourselves, slavery was at the core of the conflict; and we felt justified in hoping for the sympathy of the British in our grapple with that mighty evil. Instead of sympathy we were greeted with insult. The *Times* and the *Saturday Review* and *Punch* were rivals in virulent abuse. In all the House of Commons there were only four friends of the Union,—as I was told, a quarter of a century ago in London, by one of the four, the late Lord Houghton. Our

commerce was swept from the sea by ships built in Great Britain, armed in Great Britain and manned mainly by British subjects. And less than a year before the battle of Gettysburg, Gladstone, then a member of the cabinet, declared in a speech at Newcastle that the leaders of the South had "made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation."

No part of the function of a true poet is more important than his power to voice the feeling of the people in moments of intense national emotion; and no poet has ever more satisfactorily accomplisht this much of his duty than Lowell in the second series of the 'Biglow Papers.' It was in the first winter of the war, not long after the taking of the *Trent* and the giving up of Mason and Slidell, that Lowell sent forth the stinging stanzas of 'Jonathan to John.'

We know we've got a cause, John,
  Thet's honest, just, an' true;
We thought 't would win applause, John,
  Ef nowheres else, from you.
Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess
  His love of right," sez he,
"Hangs by a rotten fiber o' cotton:
  There's natur' in J. B.,
Ez wal 'z in you an' me!"

. . . .

Shall it be love, or hate, John?
  It's you thet's to decide;
Ain't your bonds held by Fate, John,
  Like all the world's beside?
Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess
  Wise men forgive," sez he,
"But not forgit; an' some time yit
  Thet truth may strike J. B.,
Ez wal ez you an' me!"

The firm wisdom of Lincoln settled the *Trent* affair; and the statesmanlike sagacity of a later British cabinet made possible a settlement of the *Alabama* claims; but time alone could efface in America the memory of ill-will, swiftly revived by any mention of the name of either of these British ships. The payment of the *Alabama* award was evidence of British repentance; and after a while the author of the 'Biglow Papers' went to London as American Minister to do what he could to foster a friendly feeling. At last, more than thirty years after the seizure of the *Trent*, came the Venezuela message; and then it was most unexpectedly made evident that the British attitude toward America had changed completely. The language of the American government was not only lacking in diplomatic courtesy, it was needlessly blunt. Coming from any European country, it would have been met with prompt defiance. Coming from the United States, the British government disregarded the

discourtesy and made friendly advances. For the first time in the long history of the international relations of Great Britain and the United States, the British recognized the tie of blood between the two peoples.

Conscious of their own friendliness, the British were rudely shockt by the obvious unfriendliness of the Americans, as revealed by the unanimity with which Congress voted the money Cleveland had askt for. This shock was probably useful, in so far as it forced the British to consider the various causes of the antagonistic feeling obviously existing in the United States. To discover that they were not greatly liked over here was a disagreeable surprize; and it was wholesome that they should be made to ask themselves whether there was any reason why they should be liked by us, or, indeed, by any other country. All peoples are prone to let their intense national pride veil from them the fact that there is rarely any cause why one nation should really like another nation. Every nation is so acutely aware of its own fine qualities that it fails to appeciate the fact that other peoples are far swifter to see its defects.

The same chastening experience befell us, half-a-dozen years later, when we undertook to free Cuba from the misgovernment of the Spanish. Firmly convinced of the disinterestedness

of our intentions, we were taken aback to discover that every nation of continental Europe discredited our motives, distrusted us, and disliked us. In our isolation we found only one friend;—and that was our one former enemy. Just how much actual help we got from Great Britain in the course of the Spanish war may not be known for the generation or two after which diplomatic secrets become public property; but we may gage the importance of this help by recalling the shrill protests evoked from our adversary and from the many friends of our adversary. This aid and comfort was the more significant in that it came from the head rather than from the heart, since Lord Salisbury was devoid of all sentimental sympathy for us or for our ways. Even if he was unexpugnably an aristocrat, he was also a statesman with an eye to the future; and he saw no profit in siding with a dying nation. He found that the time had come to make a friend of the lusty young people on the far side of the Western Ocean.

It is a curious characteristic of human nature that we are inclined to like those whom we have helpt, as we are also inclined to dislike those whom we have injured. So long as the British were injuring us, as they did when they were impressing our seamen and when they were allowing *Alabamas* to escape from their ports, they

could not fail to dislike us. But no sooner had they lent us their aid than their feelings changed about, and they began to like us, and to find good reason for their liking. They began to claim us as kin across the sea; and the saying that "blood is thicker than water,"—which had fallen from the mouth of an American sailor long ago as he went to the aid of a British ship,—found a frequent echo on their lips.

Then came their own hour of trial when the war with the Boers revealed their unexpected weakness, and they lookt to us confidently for a return of the sympathy which they had shown during the Cuban struggle. They were disappointed that the manifestations of this sympathy were not more abundant; and they would have been greatly grieved had they suspected how strongly public opinion in the United States held their case to be contaminated by the private greed of a gang of unscrupulous speculators. That they did not suspect this was evident to all Americans who happened to be in England at the time,—and more especially to those who chanced to hear one verse of a topical song in a London theater, in which the singer confidently asserted that if John Bull found any long difficulty in dealing with the Boers, Yankee Doodle would gladly come over and lend him a helping hand. Added evidence of their fraternal cordiality could be

found also in the fact that at one of the music-halls the men in khaki, whose evolutions formed part of a patriotic spectacle, paraded under two flags, the union-jack and the stars-and-stripes.

Altho there is one street in New York so thickly crowded with the agencies of British insurance companies that it has been nicknamed the "English Channel," nevertheless the flag of the Empire is seldom seen in the United States, whereas the flag of the Union is frequently flung to the breeze in Great Britain. Every visitor to London of late years must have remarkt the frequency of the houses in Regent Street flying the star-spangled banner. Some of these flags float over British shops seeking the trade of American travelers; and some of them are signs of the "American invasion" and serve to draw attention to the fact that the wares vended beneath them are made on this side of the Atlantic. There is scarcely a block in all the length of Regent Street in which there is not at least one shop for the sale of American goods, silverware and shoes, typewriters and sewing-machines, dress-patterns and phonographs.

Perhaps it was this American invasion, perhaps it was the internal weakness disclosed by the stress of the Boer war, perhaps there were other reasons of all sorts,—but whatever the cause, there was then to be observed a breach in the

stolid and imperturbable self-sufficiency of the British, and an unforeseen and unprecedented willingness to wonder whether there were not leaks in the ship of state and rifts in the social organism. The British started in to take stock of themselves, doubting and anxious. They were eager to prove to themselves and to others that they had not really fallen behind in the march of progress. It was at this time that an old friend of mine in London, a tory of the strictest sect, insisted on showing me over an electric-light plant in which he had an interest. He lookt at me curiously when he said, "I don't believe you have anything *better* than that in the States?" And I was too ignorant of such things to answer him; but I felt sure that ten years earlier it would not have entered his head to suggest the possibility that anything British could be inferior to anything American.

The founding of the Rhodes scholarships revealed a survival of the belated belief that Oxford alone possesses the secret of learning, but the sending of the Moseley Commission to this country was the result of the new British doubt whether all was for the best in their educational condition. Nothing could be more agreeable to an American than the tone of the report of that Commission, for it was the proper tone of one strong man speaking of another strong man,

whom he respects and from whom he may fairly hope to learn something of profit to himself.

The only certain basis for cordiality is respect and understanding; and here we Americans are more fortunate than our British cousins. However much we may at times misjudge them, at least we know them far better than they know us. We know them better, because we have always been in the habit of reading their books, and they have not even yet acquired the habit of reading ours. It may be that they are not greatly to be censured for this, since it is comparatively recently that we have begun to write many books which were worth while for a foreigner to read. But if it was not their fault, it is at least their misfortune, that they do not know us thru our authors as we know them thru theirs. It is one of the prime functions of fiction to explain the nations of the world to one another; and a countless host of uninspired novelists have set before us clearly every British characteristic, recorded with serene honesty, so that we Americans have only ourselves to blame if we fail to profit by the opportunity to see the British as they see themselves.

Our own life has not yet been set forth with the same abundance, altho of late a beginning has been made. From lack of interest in us or because, naturally enough, they preferred to

read about themselves, the British have shown as yet no great relish for the more truthful tales in which the every-day life of the American people is faithfully mirrored. Their taste has been taken rather by the more highly colored stories which depict the humorous eccentricities of frontier-life and by the more exciting romances which deal emotionally with the exceptionally violent phases of our civilization. In the years that are coming they may learn to appreciate the more delicate portrayal of the commonplaces of existence over here—the commonplaces which reveal the average man as he is naturally and normally. And it is this average man, natural and normal, whom it behooves the foreigner to get acquainted with, if he wishes to be in a position to understand us.

There are signs that the British are slowly enlarging their acquaintance with contemporary American fiction, and that they are opening their eyes to other aspects of American literature, altho the old attitude of lordly condescension and of complacent ignorance is still to be observed only too often in the pages of their literary reviews. Certainly they were hearty enough in their instant appreciation of the lasting value of Captain Mahan's analysis of the 'Influence of Sea-Power'; and they recognized promptly the significance of the fact that this explanation of the source of

British strength was due to the acuteness of an American. The old insular self-sufficiency is yielding to a growing consciousness of the worth of American historical investigators. It was a departure from their former practice when an American scholar was asked to discuss the Inquisition in one of the volumes of the Cambridge History; but it was an even franker acknowledgment of the solidarity of scholarship when an American was invited to prepare one of a British series of twelve volumes narrating the history of England itself, and when another American was requested to contribute the chapters on the War of 1812 for a composite 'History of the British Navy.'

To record these instances of appreciation is to make clear that the British have at last abandoned the attitude of intolerant isolation, which once upon a time permitted them to reprint Everett's translation of Buttmann's 'Greek Grammar' with a careful omission of the "Mass." which followed "Cambridge" at the end of the American translator's preface. It is true, however, that it is not yet twenty years since a New York man of letters, who was askt by a leading London publisher to suggest American books which it would be profitable to reprint in London, called attention to Professor Lounsbury's 'History of the English Language,' a work which

combines solid scholarship and vigorous common sense; and the London publisher himself was delighted with the book,—but his literary advisers at home dissuaded him from importing it, on the ground that the British public would not accept an American history of the English language. That these literary advisers then misjudged the British public, or that the British public has now relaxt its prejudices, would seem to be shown by the wide sale of an American dictionary of the English language recently distributed in Great Britain by the aid of the London *Times*.

Not only do the British fail to profit by the opportunity of understanding us, which lies ready to their hands in the American branch of English literature, but they also fail to perceive the real facts of our political condition. And here the fault is not theirs, but ours. We are altogether too fond of the "literature of exposure," as it has been aptly termed. There is a curious contradiction in the American character which permits us to be unfailingly optimistic, altho at the same time we delight in painting ourselves a more uniform black than would be becoming even to a nation of devils. Of course, we ourselves discount the startling revelations of this literature of exposure; but we have no right to be surprized or aggrieved that foreigners are inclined to ac-

cept it at its face value. We know that our political institutions do not work badly on the whole, and that the only serious breakdown has been in the government of our cities. But we are wont to talk against our politicians as tho they were all alike; and it is no wonder that transatlantic critics fail to find any good in any part of our government. Herein our practice is diametrically opposed to that of the British, who are prone to minimize their scandals and prompt to hush them up. Altho this may deceive them into thinking themselves better than other peoples, it tends to deceive others also.

In this respect, more especially, do we owe an inestimable debt to Mr. Bryce, who has provided the British with a clear analysis of our political machinery. The more respectful manner in which the British now discuss political movements in the United States is probably due in great part to the information placed at their command by Mr. Bryce, altho it may be ascribed also in some measure to the discovery,—made by the Tories and by the Liberal-Unionists at the time when Gladstone brought in his Home-Rule Bill,—that the written constitution of the United States is really more conservative and less liable to sudden and violent change than the unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom. It may be due possibly also to a growing perception,—which

we find Matthew Arnold attaining after he had lived among us for a while,—that the institutions of the American people really fit them, whereas the institutions of the British people are many of them outworn survivals now no longer adjusted to existing conditions.

With increasing friendliness has come increasing interest; and with increasing interest will come increasing knowledge. Friendliness, interest, knowledge,—these are the three strands out of which the bonds of a more perfect understanding must be twisted. The interest of each people in the other is now fairly equal, but knowledge is more abundant in the United States than in Great Britain, and friendliness is more evident in Great Britain than in the United States. Good feeling will grow here in America, no doubt, now that the temper of our kin across the sea has become more cordial. We shall recognize the comforting fact that the attitude of the British has changed for the better and once for all. Perhaps the day will not long be delayed when they will recognize the fact that the historian of the English people was right when he declared a score of years ago that the headship of the peoples who have the English language as their common possession is no longer with the inhabitants of the island where the stock developt its speech and affirmed its character, but has past now to

the newer and larger land which cherishes kindred ideals, and which already possesses a population outnumbering that of the mother-country two to one.

(1905.)

THE SCREAM OF THE SPREAD-EAGLE

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WHEN Joseph Rodman Drake wrote his impassioned lyric on the 'American Flag' he ended it with this resonant outburst:

> And fixt as yonder orb divine,
>   That saw thy bannered blaze unfurled,
> Shall thy proud stars resplendent shine,
>   The guard and glory of the world.

But his friend, Fitz-Greene Halleck, proposed instead four lines of his own authorship, which the younger poet accepted in place of his original draft:

> Forever float that standard sheet!
>   Where breathes the foe but falls before us?
> With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
>   And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

Drake's modesty was unfortunate; his own quatrain is far finer than his friend's, with its magniloquent mendacity. The poem was written in 1819, only six years after the British had burnt the Capitol at Washington. With the disgraceful routs not infrequent in the wretched war of 1812

yet fresh in the memory of men, there was crass stupidity in the sonorous inquiry:

> "Where breathes the foe but falls before us?"

Perhaps the explanation for Halleck's forced boastfulness may be found in the fact that his Americanism was too recent not to be perfervid, since his father is said to have been a tory contractor during the Revolution. Possibly, however, this vainglory was not personal to the poet but characteristic of the American people at that period. Students of our history are surprized at the extraordinary outflowering of national conceit, which revealed itself all over the United States in the first third of the nineteenth century —a conceit almost inconceivable to-day, since it seemed to be based not on actual accomplishment, but almost altogether on a magnificent belief in the future. This conceit and this boastfulness were not without curious inconsistencies; —for one, the celebration of the battle of Bunker Hill as tho it had been an actual triumph of our arms; and for another, the adoption of a national lyric, which commemorated a trying episode of an invasion of our soil. In those remote days of the republic when increasing responsibility had not sobered its youthful self-assertion, tall talk was abundant. Often and boldly did the eagle soar into the blue empyrean, screaming

shrilly as it rose on high. These ancestors of ours, four score years ago, may have quoted with delight Scott's inquiry:

> Breathes there a man with soul so dead
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land?

But they failed to put the proper emphasis on "to *himself* hath said." They were not speaking to themselves; they were talking out loud; and they wanted to let the whole world know that they were citizens of no mean city.

If we consider it a little more carefully, we may find that this attitude was not due solely to exuberance of youthful brag; it was not mere vanity and vexation of spirit, signifying nothing. It may seem characteristic of these youthful states in those early days, but it is not without analogs among other peoples and at other periods. It has a certain similarity to Hugo's high-flown hymns of praise to Paris, as the city of eternal illumination and as the seething brain of all Europe. However inferior in expression, it is not without its likeness to Shakspere's superb eulogy of his own island:

> This royal throne of kings, this scepterd isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise.
> This fortress built by nature for herself

> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea.

It might even be likened to that long pean to the glory of Rome, which reechoes from page to page in Livy's history of the city by the Tiber. And it has its points of similarity to the praise of Italy in Vergil's 'Georgics,' which Ronsard imitated with freedom in his 'Hymn to France.' Our self-satisfaction may have been more flagrant and more flamboyant; it may even have been less obviously justified; but it did not differ in kind from that which we can find at one time or another in men of every other race.

This habit of self-assertive boastfulness is both primitive and puerile. Primitive it is beyond all question, and we find it flourishing in the remotest past. Primeval humanity was wont to vaunt its own daring feats unhesitatingly and unceasingly. The truly bold man was a braggart, even if the coward was also a boaster. The stalwart warriors of the Norse legends were abundant and blatant in laudation of their own exploits. The Homeric heroes vied with one another in self-praise, just as the Pawnee, in Cooper's story, tied to the stake, insulted his foes with the list of the many Sioux whose scalps he had taken. In the later middle ages the feudal chiefs were only a little less ready to bedeck them-

selves with laurel; and they listened gladly to the hireling minstrel whose copious chant recounted their mighty deeds. Puerile this habit is also, or at least boyish. The youth of our own time indulge in it, even when they are attaining almost the full stature of a man. Consider the taunting lyrics which hurtle to and fro across the football field, the partisans of each college rhythmically asserting its own certainty of victory,—even when the sturdy young players themselves may feel that they are but a forlorn hope. Bring back to mind the rattling stanzas in which the young graduate promises that his future son shall follow in his own footsteps and aid in vanquishing the eight or the nine or the eleven of the rival institution of learning,—"as his daddy used to do."

Yet if this habit of self-laudation has endured thru the ages, we may rest assured that there is a good reason for it, and that it has a utility of its own. It must serve a purpose of some sort, or it would have died out long ago. And this utility suggests itself, when we note that, nowadays at least, the boastfulness is no longer strictly personal. It is mainly collective; it is to be ascribed not to the individual, but to the group of which the individual is a member. If we examine these undergraduate lyrics we discover at once that the college youths are not really

praising themselves; they are only vociferating their loyalty to the institution they love. Altho they brag bravely enough when they are assembled together, they would be ashamed, one and all, to make any exaggerated claim each for himself as a separate person. Apparently the habit of boastfulness is a survival of an early clan-instinct, probably wholesome once upon a time, and possibly even necessary to nerve every member of the tribe to conflict and to encourage him to make the utmost effort for the martial success on which the existence of the group depended. Brag was a real stimulus of loyalty and devotion and self-sacrifice. It supplied the needful excitement of patriotic ecstasy. Diodorus tells us that when the Gauls accept battle "they sing the feats of their ancestors and celebrate their own valor," seeking to insult and humiliate their opponent and to "diminish the courage of his heart by their words."

To-day we observe it as the survival of an instinct, which aided self-preservation and which as first personal has now become communal. Advancing civilization has made modesty about his own accomplishments the distinguishing mark of a gentleman; but it has not yet succeeded in getting this principle accepted by the group as it has been accepted by the individual. Sister colleges and rival cities and competing nations still keep up this outworn custom, however prim-

itive and however puerile the more enlightened may know it to be.

To many of us this habit of vaunting our own valor and all our other virtues seems like a survival of the unfittest. It is a relic of savagery, like the custom of wearing rings in the ears, already abandoned by most men and by many women. It is pitiful and it is foolish, like the Chinese device of painting on their shields dreadful dragons and other awe-inspiring monsters, in the belief that this will strike fear into the souls of their enemies. But there is something to be said on the other side;—if you persist in asserting that you have a certain quality, you are, as a matter of fact, more likely to acquire it, and also more likely to make others believe that you possess it. The method of achieving these results may be distasteful to many of us; yet the results are achieved somehow and they are worth achieving. It is an interesting topic of speculation how far what we know as spread-eagleism in the United States—and whatever are the equivalents of spread-eagleism in other nations—may be a necessary accompaniment of patriotism. Just as there are souls who cannot get religion without shouting, so there are true patriots whose fervor thirsts for the waving of "Old Glory," who fight all the better for the belief that one Englishman is as good as three Frenchmen, and who are

moved to self-devotion by the assertion that Paris is the lighthouse of civilization. "Antiquity held that to be a vice, which Christianity has elevated into a virtue under the name of humility," so Renan asserted; and, perhaps, in this respect as in others we moderns are not quite so Christian as we profess to be.

The man who is speaking for Buncombe may be violent and he may be absurd without being insincere. And if his turgid oratory really is a stimulus to patriotic fervor, then is his high-flown rhetoric not in vain. One of the shrewdest of contemporary French critics, M. Emile Faguet, not long ago dwelt on the duty of persuading a nation "to love itself, deeply, warmly, energetically. The cult of himself is not to be recommended to any individual; but to a people the cult of itself must be presented as a duty. Even if patriotism was not a duty, it would be a necessity, so long as there are other countries wherein it has not gone out of fashion." Belief in the brotherhood of man, in the solidarity of humanity, is likely to be more and more potent in the immediate future; it is certain to soften the asperities of international intercourse; but it must not be allowed to weaken our devotion to our own national ideal or our confidence that we have a mission not entrusted to other peoples.

The dislike which the Jew of old had for the

Gentile, and which the Greek had for the barbarian, was a source of strength to the Hebrew people and to the Greek race. The Roman had a kindred feeling of hostile contempt toward all who were not citizens of the great republic; and this belief did its share in making the legions irresistible. Even after the empire had been built on the ruin of the republic and after the Latins had long been borrowing the philosophy of the Greeks, there was widespread distaste for the doctrine of the brotherhood of humanity, when Seneca declared it in the reign of Nero. It seemed to many of the most enlightened men of those days to be a new-fangled theory, pernicious and quite contrary to the old Roman tradition. Here we may see a survival of an earlier sentiment, when every stranger was by that fact an enemy. The same feeling lingers even now in the nooks and corners of Europe. It finds expression in the anecdote of the British lout, beholding a man he had never seen before and promptly proposing to "'eave 'arf a brick at 'im." Perhaps there may be a faint echo of this self-righteous attitude even in the noble 'Recessional' of Mr. Rudyard Kipling,—or at least in a single stanza of it:

> If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
>   Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
> Such boastings as the Gentiles use,

Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

In the harmless banter now bandied to and fro between the chief cities of the United States, New York taking pleasure in projecting sarcasms on Boston and Philadelphia and Chicago, and these cities promptly returning every merry missile on the volley,—in this interchange of humorous chaff, we can find proof of the amelioration of modern manners, since these bloodless duels are the analogs of the bitter rivalries of old which used to result in deadly conflicts, long protracted and often renewed. The cities of medieval Italy not only praised themselves incessantly, but they were also prolific in abuse of all rival communities. Even to-day the American visitor may be astonished, as he is amused, to discover that the Sienese still keep alive a keen sense of injury for the insults proffered and for the iniquities performed by the Florentines five centuries ago.

Time was when the attitude of every people toward every other people, and more especially toward its own particular rival, was not only hostile but also suspicious. They were ever ready to believe the worst that might be said against those whom they hated; and they believed this without any evidence, or even against

all evidence. The Trojans feared the Greeks even bearing gifts. The Romans had no confidence in the good faith of the Carthaginians,—altho we have now no reason to suppose that the Latins were really any more scrupulous or any more conscientious than their African enemies. The French in the last century were loud in the denunciation of the perfidy of Albion, in spite of the fact that the British pride themselves more particularly on their straightforward plain-dealing. The British themselves hold the Russians to be especially untrustworthy; and one London politician had the bad manners to point a remark about Russia by citing the adage that "he who would sup with the devil must have a long spoon."

A hundred and fifty years ago the British were in the habit of heaping their hostile contempt upon the Dutch, who had taught them agriculture and seamanship, and who had once swept the English channel with a broom at the masthead of the flagship of their fleet. It needs to be noted that the influence of this British attitude toward Holland can be detected even in the veracious history of New Amsterdam written by the worthy Diedrich Knickerbocker. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that the gentle Irving, who hated nobody and who despised no race, had been nourisht on the British classics of an

earlier generation. Perhaps it is one of the more obvious advantages of our many commingled stocks that this note of contemptuous hostility is almost entirely absent from international discussion here in the United States; and the same cause may be responsible also for our comparative freedom from suspicion as to the motives and intentions of our neighbors. And yet we may as well confess that if our immediate neighbors were our aggressive rivals, we also might fall from grace. After all, the wit was telling the truth when he declared that "civilization is the lamb's skin in which barbarism masquerades."

Just as the Romans used to express freely their low opinion of Punic faith, so the French are now lavish in their denunciation of British hypocrisy. The islanders resent this bitterly; and they are swift to deny that there is any foundation for the charge. Now and again, it is true, a Londoner of an acuter intelligence than his fellows is moved to consider the accusation seriously and to account for it as best he can. Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, for one, has explained that the absence of logic in his countrymen, their dislike for theory and their direct practicality cause "the English mind to be set down, perhaps unjustly, as both utilitarian and hypocritical," since "it drives sincerely at its objects, and does

not care to give them a form in which they are obviously reconcilable with one another. And a tissue of unreconciled sincerities has all the appearance of a gigantic hypocrisy." These unreconciled sincerities are abundant,—the appalling condition of Piccadilly at night, the prevention of vivisection and the promotion of field sports, (including pigeon-shooting with all its wanton cruelty), the alliance of Beer and the Bible on which the Conservative party relies for support, the firm retention of Egypt with the repeated declaration that the British occupation is only temporary, and many another flagrant inconsistency which it is needless now to catalog.

And if these irreconcilable sincerities so impress an Englishman, how much more flagrant must they appear to a Frenchman, governed by logic and insisting upon a consistent social organization. The French may be excused for considering this "tissue of irreconcilable sincerities" to be hypocrisy, pure and simple, made even more offensive by the imperturbable assumption that the British rule their conduct according to a loftier standard than any other people. And this French distrust is the price the British are called upon to pay for their boasting. If they were not puft up with pride because of their belief in their own superior morality, perhaps that virtue might not be under suspicion.

The roar of the British lion when it is vaunting its virtue, is no more grateful to alien ears than the scream of the American eagle or than the crowing of the Gallic cock. Probably it was some chance echo of this roar which moved Sir Leslie Stephen to declare that he hated "all patriotic sentiments; they mean vulgar brag."

Perhaps we Americans, having a more intimate acquaintance with our kin across the sea than is possest by their former foes across the channel, are able to reconcile some of their insincerities. We cannot deny the evidence, but we can understand the explanation which deprives the facts of some part of the weight they seem to carry. It may be that the British are not altogether wrong in thinking that their moral standard is really higher than that of some other races, even if there yawns a wide gap between their preaching and their practice. It is probable, after all, that they really know themselves better than any foreigner can know them; and it is even possible that their self-praise is not altogether misplaced. "I believe that the opinion a man has of himself (if he be accustomed to self-analysis) is of more worth than that of all the rest of the world"; and what Lowell said of a man, may very well be true also of a nation.

Of course, it would be absurd to maintain that the British are accustomed to "self-analysis."

Nor do they relish it when it is attempted by a critic as keen as Matthew Arnold, who tried in vain to force them to gaze on their own image in his highly polished mirror. Even now they might find profit in weighing the words of wisdom scattered thru the disinterested studies of competent observers from abroad. As we Americans took to heart certain of the warnings contained in Tocqueville's 'Democracy in America,' and in Mr. Bryce's 'American Commonwealth,' so the British might have considered more carefully Emerson's 'English Traits' and Taine's 'Notes on England.' It was an Englishman, John Stuart Mill, who said that "even the pleasure of self-appreciation, in the great majority, is mainly dependent upon the opinion of others"; and he added there is not "to most men any proof so demonstrative of their own virtue or talent as that people in general seem to believe in it."

But people in general are moved to doubt when we dwell complacently on our own virtues or when we proclaim our own talents vociferously. What the Lion or the Eagle insists on shouting thru the megaphone fails to carry conviction to the listening foreigner; and it is by the reverberating assertions of the loud-voiced that the nations of the earth are tempted to judge one another, since the speech of the wiser among us is never shrill. Unfortunately for every nation, those

who have the full knowledge needful for a just valuation of its merits and its demerits rarely possess also the equally necessary disinterestedness, while those who may have the proper detachment of mind are likely to lack adequate information. Now and again a man of insight, who has traveled in many lands and who has kept his mind open as well as his eyes, is able to make comparisons of national characteristics, instructive to the people of both countries. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, started in life with the advantage of being a Scot and of having his full share of the shrewdness of that stock. So keenly did he feel the need for a better understanding between nations that he once humorously suggested a law requiring "the people of one country to be educated in another."

In the same letter he tried to set up in parallel columns the virtues and the vices of the English and the French, asserting that they "made a balance." Here is his little table:

THE ENGLISH	THE FRENCH
Hypocrisy.	Free from hypocrisy.
Good stout reliable friends.	Incapable of friendship.
Dishonest to the root.	Fairly honest.
Fairly decent to women.	Rather indecent to women.

He added the comment that "the Americans hold the English faults, dishonesty and hypocrisy, perhaps not as strongly, but still to the exclusion

of others. It is strange that such defects should be so hard to eradicate after a century of separation."

Stevenson, as it happened, was well fitted for an international comparison like this. If other observers of other nationalities, equally well equipt and equally disinterested, were to act on this hint of his and were to attempt to draw up a balance-sheet of the virtues and vices of all the chief races, the result might be as valuable as it would be interesting. Probably it would be very surprizing also, since the total number of good points awarded to each of the leading peoples would certainly be found to vary far less than would be anticipated by any one who had not given thought to the problem, but who had held carelessly the common conviction that his own race was unquestionably foremost in all the qualities which are needed to make a nation great.

It would be possible to make out a list of ten qualities—since the decimal system is one of the most useful of modern tools,—which a race must possess in some measure if it aspires to a high place among civilized states. Any one attempting such a list would be forced to set down Physical Courage, first of all, since it is most obviously indispensable to independent national existence. Next might come three allied quali-

ties also essential to a prolonged national life, —Patriotism (which must include loyalty and the faculty of co-operation), Self-sacrifice, and Justice (which must include the respect for law). After these there might be set down another group of three, not so closely allied and on the whole perhaps not quite so important,—Honesty, Energy and Intelligence. And to make up the ten, three more would have to be added,— Thoroness, Tenacity and Sympathy. This list pretends to no scientific precision; and the qualities included may not have each of them the fittest name. Determination, for example, might be a better word than Tenacity; and Toleration might be substituted for Sympathy.

It may well be that these are not really the ten essential qualities of a great people and that a more satisfactory list could be drawn up without difficulty by some one else better fitted for the task. But it will serve as a suggestion,—which is its sole purpose. And then the further suggestion may be advanced that the chief peoples of our Western civilization are the Austro-Hungarians, the British, the French, the Germans, the Italians, the Russians, the Scandinavians, the Spaniards, the Swiss, and the inhabitants of these United States. The arrangement is alphabetical; and the list itself is only tentative. It is open to obvious objection; and yet it may possi-

bly be as serviceable as any other. It gives us ten peoples or races or states, as the case may be; and we have already a list of ten qualities or characteristics highly important to any nation. Let us then go one step further and suggest a marking system under which ten is the maximum number of points to be assigned to any one quality.

Now, if we could find a disinterested and well equipt citizen of each of these ten states, if we could get him to accept this list of ten qualities needed by every race, and then if we could persuade him to assign to every state, including his own, the exact mark which he thought this state was entitled to receive for its share of every one of these qualities,—if we could do this, the resulting table would be curious, to say the least. And it would be very instructive also, containing not a few surprizes for most of us. With ten observers and ten qualities and with ten as the maximum for any single quality, the total number of points attainable by each of the ten peoples would be one thousand. But we may guess that no total would exceed perhaps seven hundred and that none would fall below six hundred. In other words, there would be no very great divergence between the nation which received the most points and that which received the fewest.

And one reason for this is plain. However

well equipt the observers might be and however disinterested, no one of them could be expected to overcome his native bias absolutely. Every one of them would tend to overmark his own state,—and even to overmark also the states which had similar characteristics to his own. We may be pretty certain that the Latins would each of them more or less over-reward their fellow-Latins, and that the Teutons would in like manner assign points a little too liberally to their fellow-Teutons. But the Latins would probably undermark the most of the Northern peoples; and the Teutons would undermark the most of the Southern races. Thus there would be approximate justice, one personal equation tending to correct the other. And however dissatisfied we might be with the total number of marks assigned to us, and with our position compared with each of the other states, there would be profit in our discovering what competent and unprejudiced observers chosen from nine other peoples had decided to be our virtues and our vices. Our virtues can take care of themselves, and perhaps the less we dwell on them the better. But our vices had best be made known to us as soon as possible, that we may overcome them if we can. The struggle itself will be helpful, even if Renan was right in asserting that "every nation of us goes thru history

carrying with it some essential vice which must destroy it at last."

Just as we should probably be surprized to see how little the totals would vary (however differently each of them might be made up), so we should certainly be astonisht to find an almost absolute equality between the states as regards one of the qualities,—and that the very quality upon the possession of which every people plumes itself most particularly. This quality is Physical Courage; and it is pride in this which led the American bard to ask "Where breathes the foe but falls before us?"—which made the British historian boast about "the thin red line,"—and which has tempted the French to quote frequently the Italian praise of their onslaught—*la furia francese*. The instinctive feeling that this one quality is absolutely essential to national existence and that a race without Physical Courage is doomed to lose its independence and almost its individuality, has led every people to set this in the forefront of its national virtues. Yet the possession of Physical Courage by a nation is like the possession of two legs and two arms by a man; it is to be taken for granted; it is nothing to brag about. Every people must have it or they cease to be a nation. Without it they sink swiftly to the sad condition of the lowly dwellers in the Valley of the Nile, down-trodden tillers

of the scanty soil for scores of centuries, ever ruled by aggressive aliens of more stalwart stocks.

Whenever Physical Courage begins to be uncommon, then the career of the nation is nearing its end. Tacitus recorded a saying of his time, that only those Roman troops were really good who were not Roman; and this might have made it clear to him that the days of the Empire were already numbered. The barbarians were even then making ready to break in and to capture the Capitol. And it is well also to remember that civilization has no monopoly of mere bravery. Indeed, the disregard of death is often a characteristic of the lower races. The bard of the British Empire recognized this amply when he wrote "Here's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy; you're a first-rate fighting man!"

Just as every people must have Physical Courage in a high degree as a condition precedent to independent existence, so it must also have a full assortment and a fair proportion of every other of the ten needful qualities. The very fact that a nation survives is evidence enough that it possesses a sufficient share of these qualities, since without them it would have been crowded aside and crusht down. This is another reason why the totals awarded to each of the ten chief peoples by an international tribunal of disinterested experts would not greatly vary. This is a reason

also why every disinterested expert is likely to indulge in a smile whenever there falls on his ears the roar of the Lion, the crow of the Cock, or the scream of the Eagle.

(1906.)

AMERICAN MANNERS

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EVERY one who is interested in observing the workings of human nature must have noted with amusement the fact that the several nations are swift to resent any criticism of their manners and customs when this is proffered by a foreigner, altho they listen without anger to an animadversion far more stringent when this is made by a native. But a little reflection supplies at once an easy explanation of this apparent inconsistency. What the stranger may say against us we resent sharply, because we are inclined to believe him too ignorant to have a right to an opinion about us, whereas we cannot help crediting one of ourselves with a knowledge of all the extenuating circumstances which mitigate the severity of his adverse judgment. Furthermore, whenever a man from another country says anything we do not like, we are inclined to assume that his motive is envy, or contempt, or at least hostility of some sort; but we find it possible to believe in the good-will of a fellow-citizen even if he insists on picking out the darkest spots in our national life.

It is not whose ox is gored that makes the difference, but rather whose bull does the goring.

Here, for example, is a very vigorously exprest opinion of England as it was in 1870:—"a community where political forms, from the monarchy down to the popular chamber, are mainly hollow shams disguising the coarser supremacy of wealth, where religion is mainly official and political and is ever too ready to dissever itself alike from the spirit of justice, the spirit of charity, and the spirit of truth, and where literature does not as a rule permit itself to discuss serious subjects frankly and worthily,—a community, in short, where the great aim of all classes and orders with power is by dint of rigorous silence, fast shutting of the eyes and stern stopping of the ears, somehow to keep the social pyramid on its apex, with the fatal result of preserving for England its glorious fame as a paradise for the well-to-do, a purgatory for the able, and a hell for the poor."

Now if this had been penned and publisht by a Frenchman of distinction or by an American of prominence, the British would have waxt indignant and they would have denounced the calumniator, bidding him to look to himself and to open his eyes to the condition of his own country. But, as it happened, this scathing indictment of their whole social organization evoked no shrill protest in Great Britain because the man who wrote it was an Englishman of distinc-

tion and of prominence, Mr. John Morley, a future cabinet-minister and a future biographer of the most popular of prime-ministers. Indeed, the narrator of Gladstone's career could have found a warrant for this cutting analysis of insular civilization in a letter of Gladstone himself,— a letter in which he asserted that "the English race (I am a pure Scotchman myself) are a great fact in the world, and I believe will so continue; but no race stands in greater need of discipline in every form, and, among other forms, that which is administered by criticism vigorously directed to canvassing their character and claims." And then Gladstone softened a little and added that, "under such discipline I believe they are capable of a great elevation and of high performance."

Here Gladstone revealed his statesmanlike insight. Every race stands in constant need of criticism. As it will crossly dismiss the criticism of foreigners, however acute and however valid, there is a more imperative duty imposed on its own members, to criticize themselves, and to keep on pointing out the symptoms of ill-health in the body politic. Altho it may be congenial to a few spirits ever out of sympathy with their environment, the task is not grateful, but it is useful, and it may even be necessary. In the recently publisht correspondence of Taine, there is a letter (written to Albert Sorel in the

darkest days of the black year, 1870, when France was at the mercy of the Germans), in which the great French critic, a devoted lover of his native land, as these letters prove in every page, declares that when peace shall come, it will be the duty of men like himself to try to make his fellow-countrymen understand the causes of their calamity; it will be their duty to give lectures and to write articles, "instructive and disagreeable."

In one of the early years of the twentieth century an anonymous Englishman, engaged in business in New York, declared that it was painful to notice the difference in the manners of employees in British and American shops and offices; and an American editor, recording this declaration, asserted that all Americans notice this difference when they return from abroad. One of these home-coming travelers voiced his opinion in a letter to a newspaper, in which he inquired plaintively: "What ails the manners of New York?" Then he ventured the startling declaration, that, when he came home to the city of his birth after an absence of ten years in Europe, he found here "a people compared to whom the Berserkers were Chesterfields and the Tatars a race of Talleyrands."

This last alliterative sentence is perhaps not so completely annihilating as its author intended when he polisht it up, since the public morality

and the private morals of Talleyrand and of Chesterfield do not commend themselves as worthy models for American imitation, whereas there was a hearty manliness about the Berserkers and the Tatars, a masterful directness which healthy Americans cannot fail to appreciate. But however unfortunate the phrase, there is no mistaking the intention of the writer, and his desire to denounce the social atrocities of his native city. And altho the bulk of this denunciation is launcht more specifically against New York and the New Yorkers, there is a willingness on the part of most of the denouncers to enlarge their target to include the whole United States and all the inhabitants thereof.

In many cases the accusation insists that our manners are much worse than they used to be, and that we have fallen from the high standard transmitted to us by the last generation, or by some generation preceding that. Now here, if nowhere else, it is easy to make a stand and repulse the groundless charge. There is no basis whatever for any belief that our manners have ever been any better than they are now. Or at least there has never been a time when our manners were not being assailed, and when the assertion was not frequent that they were steadily degenerating. It is with our manners as it is with our servants—every age shrilly expresses its dis-

satisfaction with those it knows best. When *Adam,* in 'As You Like It,' proffered his savings to his young master, *Orlando* lookt back regretfully to a period when such conduct was not uncommon:

> O good old man, how well in thee appears
> The constant service of the antique world,
> When service sweat for duty, not for meed!
> Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
> Where none will sweat but for promotion.

Shakspere wrote these lines more than three centuries ago; and the sentiment exprest in them echoes to-day in many an essay on the servant question. So it is more than half a century now that Lowell put on paper the remark of one of the older inhabitants of Cambridge, who was something of a Jeremiah in his octogenarian vigor, to the effect that "My children say, 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir'; my grandchildren, 'Yes' and 'No'; and I am every day expecting to hear 'Blank your eyes!' for an answer when I ask a service of my great-grandchildren. Why, sir, I can remember when more respect was paid to Governor Hancock's lackey at commencement than the Governor and all his suite get now!"

Perhaps the worthy old gentleman, born in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, would not have found it easy to answer a question or two as to why Governor Hancock should have a lackey,

and as to why any special respect should be paid to this lackey. What seemed to the octogenarian as a loss of manners might be explained as a gain in manliness. But the evidence is abundant that from the very beginning, from July 4, 1776, American manners have been sadly unsatisfactory to American conservatives as well as to the most of such foreigners as rashly adventured themselves amongst us.

Mrs. Trollope, Captain Marryat and Charles Dickens have left us the record of their impressions; and their record is fatal to any belief that there has been deterioration of late years. However bad our manners may be now, they cannot be worse than they were when these three lower-middle-class British novelists were shockt by our lack of repose and distinction. There is some consolation to be found for our sad estate in taking down Tuckerman's book on 'America and Her Commentators,' as instructive as it is amusing; and in assuring ourselves by a perusal of its pages that we are at least no worse now than foreigners found us in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century.

It is in that unforgetable essay of Lowell's 'On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners'—which was written just after the close of the Civil War, and which might well be required as the basis of an examination-paper from every wandering

Briton and Gaul and Teuton who proposes to survey us from a car-window, as a preparation for a book about us—it is in this paper of Lowell's that we find the best summary of the attitude of the ordinary European traveler toward America and the Americans:

"But whatever we might do or leave undone, we were not genteel, and it was uncomfortable to be continually reminded that tho we should boast that we were the Great West till we were black in the face, it did not bring us an inch nearer to the world's West End. That sacred inclosure of respectability was tabooed to us. The Holy Alliance did not inscribe us on its visiting-list. The Old World of wigs and orders and liveries would shop with us; but we must ring at the area-bell, and not venture to awaken the more august clamors of the knocker. Our manners, it must be granted, had none of those graces that stamp the caste of Vere de Vere, in whatever museum of British antiquities they may be hidden. In short, we were vulgar."

It is this ingrained European belief that we are not genteel, that we are vulgar, which underlies Matthew Arnold's complaint that Americans lack distinction, and which sustains the detestation so shrilly exprest by Ruskin—who was himself the son of a liquor-dealer, and who was wholly devoid of the self-restraint and the ur-

banity which have been held to mark the conduct of a true gentleman. It is this belief that inspired Renan's fear that the Americanizing of the modern world might mean the vulgarizing of that world. A belief so widely held must have some justification; and it is wholesome for us to ask ourselves now and again what this justification may be. Are foreigners right or wrong, when they express their dread of our influence? In their eyes, our manners are bad; and in the eyes also of many Americans who have been to Europe and who have lingered there fascinated by the indubitable charm of an Old World civilization. Are our manners in America really as vile as they seem to these observers contrasting them with the standards of Europe?

The question is not easy to answer; but we may be helpt to a solution by remembering that the standard of Europe—in so far as there is any uniformity over there—is not final, and that it is the result of feudal tradition. It is a codification of the practices of countries still conserving the habits of an aristocratic social organization and still governed by the idea of caste, stanchly rejecting the theory of democracy, and absolutely hostile to any practical application of the idea of human equality. When the Englishman engaged in business in New York complained of the absence of civility in America, perhaps

what he really meant was that he found here a lack of the servility which is customary in England and which seems to most Americans unmanly and detestable.

The Englishman who has money expects to find his inferiors cringing before him; and in his own country his expectation is rarely disappointed. When he happens to come over here, he fails to find it and he misses it. Even when he is devoid of haughtiness and when he tries to be condescending, he does not elicit the response he has expected. The explanation is to be found in the fact that whether he intends it or not, he assumes the attitude of a superior; and this is something that the ordinary American resents instantly and righteously. It was a queen, Carmen Sylva, who declared that "princes are brought up to be affable to every man; and every man should be brought up like a prince." But until every man is brought up like a prince, affability may take on the less agreeable disguise of condescension; and, as Robert Louis Stevenson shrewdly remarkt, "the pleasures of condescension are strangely one-sided."

American social usages may differ from European without in reality being inferior, however vociferously the Europeanized Americans assert this inferiority. Especially different is the relation of master and servant, and that of

buyer and seller in a shop. As to this latter, the British assumption seems to be that by his mere possession of money to spend the purchaser is raised to a superior caste and is thereby entitled to be treated with flattering adulation. The American assumption is that buyer and seller are two equal parties to a bargain by which both hope to profit, and that they meet on the level ground of self-interest and common courtesy.

Perhaps actual discourtesy is rather more common in London shops than in those of New York. Possibly Mr. Hopkinson Smith went to an extreme when he suggested that "if you go into an English store the proprietor will take it for granted that you have come to crack his safe"; but the American traveler in London is lucky if he has not been exposed to the surly resentment of a shopkeeper in whose store he may have failed to make a purchase. Nothing more surprizes intelligent British travelers in the United States, and nothing pleases them more, than the open hospitality of American stores of the better class, in which any visitor is welcomed and in which no visitor is annoyed by importunities to become a purchaser. In this respect even the more important establishments of Paris are not yet on the plane of the best of the great shops of our chief American cities.

The more familiar an impartial observer may be with the social usages and habits of Great Britain and of the continent of Europe, the less emphatic will be his feeling that the foreign standard is really superior to the American; and the more inclined he will be to explain away certain apparent disadvantages of our attitude as the price we pay for what we hold in high esteem—equality and democracy, manliness and self-respect. The fault that such an observer will be most likely to find is not with the American standard of manners itself, but rather with our failure to attain the standard that we accept.

The American theory of manners, if one may attempt to formulate its basis, is founded not on any artificial distinctions of social position, but on the simple relation of man to man. Underneath it lies our belief in equality of right and in the accompanying duty of granting to others, spontaneously and ungrudgingly, all the rights that we claim for ourselves. In Europe, bad manners, whether of the upper or the lower classes, generally spring from a lack of sympathy. In America, bad manners are caused by want of thought; they are the result of carelessness more than of wilfulness. The American is so busy minding his own business that he has no time to be as regardful of the rights of others as he knows he ought to be. He does not mean to be rude;

and if his attention is called to it, he mends his manners, even if only for the moment. The American is profoundly good-natured—and good nature is an integral element of good manners. The carnival gaiety of an election-night crowd in any American city, no matter how bitter may have been the preceding canvass, finds no parallel in any other country in the world; it is an expression of that good-humored toleration which is a chief characteristic of the American people and which every intelligent foreigner notes almost immediately upon his arrival here.

The spirit which animates an American crowd, the self-restraint and the self-respect that it reveals, will not be found in corresponding gatherings in the great cities of Europe. The feeling for order, the respect for the rights of others, is shown in actions like our automatic dropping into line before a ticket-window, a result rarely attained in Europe except under police supervision. In the United States we believe that who comes first should be served first, whereas in Great Britain only too often every man fights for the best place, willing enough that the devil should take the hindmost. Even when an American crowd is scrambling forward tumultuously, in apparent disregard of everything, this disregard is only apparent. In the very thick of the rush for the cars of the Brooklyn Bridge, if a woman

or a child happened to stumble the crowd would part instantly and helping hands would be outstretched on every side. Even if a paper bag of oranges or apples broke an effort would be made to recover them and to return them to the owner. In other words, the American is not so intent on his own business that he cannot be recalled to his duty to his fellows; and he is willing enough to give practical expression to his sympathy, if only his attention can be aroused for the need of it.

No doubt there is a brusqueness and a carelessness of others which we feel to be far too frequent, but which have at heart no real discourtesy, or at least no intention of discourtesy. A great city, with its thronging thousands, has no time for the minor courtesies of a less hurried existence; and we have no right to expect that those who rush past us in the streets should give us the greeting which is grateful and appropriate when we pass another party high up in the lonely paths of the Swiss mountains. Nor have we any right to expect to find in a modern mercantile community the exquisite punctilio which lingers in those belated lands where the duel is not yet disestablisht. There is certain to be enforced courtesy wherever a man must answer with his life for any casual affront.

In the territory of the ready trigger politeness

is excessive, even if it is only external. In her 'Bits of Gossip' Rebecca Harding Davis has recorded an experience of her father in the South more than half a century ago. As he was walking thru the village street one morning he observed that a man was following him rapidly, with a pistol in his hand. Naturally enough he started back, whereupon the man with the pistol thanked him courteously, proffering the simple explanation: "It is the gentleman on the other side of the street that I wish to shoot." Then the trigger was pulled, and the man on the other side of the street fell dead, with a bullet in his heart; and Mrs. Davis adds that "during the next six months more than thirty men were shot on the same grassy highway."

"Different times, different manners," as the French phrase it; and in giving up the practice of the duello we have surrendered also a few of the more elaborate forms of politeness which accompanied it, with the obvious advantage that our good manners now, even if they are somewhat diminisht, are founded not on any fear of the fatal consequences of a lapse from good-breeding, but on a self-respect which is strong enough to respect others also. A self-respect which is so feeble as to resemble self-assertion is a constant foe to easy intercourse. Indeed, self-assertion is one of the most offensive aspects

of that self-consciousness which needs to be curbed and brought under control before man is fit for association with his fellows. And here we have an explanation of certain of the less pleasant peculiarities of American life, due to the presence here of countless thousands of foreigners, who have not yet risen to a full appreciation of American standards.

Coming from countries where they and their forebears have been down-trodden for centuries, these immigrants find themselves here suddenly free from all interference; and it is small wonder that at first they do not know what to do with their unexampled liberty. They take a long breath and look about them; and often they seem to believe that the only way in which they can attain to a realizing sense of their new-found freedom is by self-assertion. Very likely, indeed, this is a necessary step in their recognition of their own manhood, however offensive may be its immediate manifestations. With many this first step is taken swiftly; and they are then ready to take a second and to act on the American theory that equality does not mean only that you are as good as the other man, but also and especially that the other man is just as good as you are.

Sometimes they refuse to grasp this, or are unable to understand it and to see its full sig-

nificance. Some of them therefore remain in this first stage, suspicious and aggressive; but even here the case is not helpless, for the children of these recalcitrants go to the common schools and are molded into Americans by the pressure of their school-fellows, perhaps more than by the direct guidance of the teachers. And the kindergarten with its sweet spirit of forbearance and of tender yielding must influence many and make them ready for the more emphatic training of the schools. Then what the children learn in kindergarten and in school, what they see with their eager young eyes, what they hear with their eager young ears, they take home to their parents; and we behold the strange spectacle of the elders learning manners from their own young. The process is slow, no doubt; but it is unceasing, and it is certain of success at last.

However deficient American manners may seem to us in the minor urbanities, however uncouth we must confess them to be now and again, there is no reason for despair, or even for any deep dissatisfaction. Our manners are different from those which obtain in England and in France; but who shall say that they are really inferior? Our manners are different, because we ourselves are different. We admit the difference readily enough, but never by any chance have we any temptation to admit inferiority. And if the con-

trast of American manners with European manners seems sometimes to be to our disadvantage, this is often because the contrast is unfairly made. The average American with all his casual imperfections is set up beside the best that Europe has to show. And this in itself is a compliment to our social organization and an evidence of its success. As our society is not stratified by caste, there is nobody here to compare with the European gentleman except the average American.

The European definition of a gentleman may be based on birth or on breeding or on occupation; and all of these are distinctions external to the man himself. The American girl, when she was told in England that "gentlemen were men who did not work," answered promptly that we had men who did not work in America also, and that we called them tramps. The American definition of a gentleman is not founded on any external test; it is based on the quality of the man himself, whatever his antecedents; it is rooted in his own self-respect and in his respect for others. Davy Crockett said that Andrew Jackson was a perfect gentleman, because he set the whisky-jug on the table—"and lookt the other way." This nice feeling for the feeling of others is one element of the character of a gentleman, as we recognize it; and another element is exprest in Lowell's assertion that the Westerner "has, at

least, that first quality of a gentleman, that he stands squarely on his own feet, and is as unconscious as a prairie."

To say these things is not to say that our manners are perfect or that they cannot be improved. No American who has ever had occasion to consider the subject carefully is likely to be at all boastful on behalf of his fellow-citizens. Even if manners in the great cities of America are not conspicuously inferior to manners in the great cities of Europe, we ought not to be satisfied, and we ought to strive for a superiority which our easier circumstances would seem to demand from us. We ought to bear in mind always that good manners are the small change with which a man may pay his way thru the world. Even if our casual discourtesies are due not so much to innate rudeness as to thoughtless carelessness, there is all the more reason why we should take to heart the advice contained in the letter of an English nobleman to his sons:

"Before you speak, let your mind be full of courtesy; the civility of the hat, a kind look, or a word from a person of honor, has bought that service which money could not. And he that can gain or preserve a friend, and the opinion of civility, for the moving of the hat, or a gentle look, and will not, is sillily severe: spare not to spend that which costs nothing; be liberal of them, but

be not prodigal, lest they become too cheap. I remember Sir Francis Bacon calls behavior the garment of the mind; it is well resembled, and rightly expresses the behavior I would have in proportion to a garment. It must be fit, plain and rich, useful and fashionable. I should not have advised you to such a regard of your outside, the most trifling part of man, did I not know how much the greatest part of the world is guided by it, and what notable advantages are gained thereby, even upon some very wise men, the request of an acceptable person being seldom, or at least unwillingly, denied."

(1905.)

AMERICAN HUMOR

AMERICAN HUMOR

IT is one of the most markt peculiarities of this new century that we are all engaged in an effort to learn more about the rest of the world. The Germans are curious about the French, the French are trying to understand the British; and we Americans are striving to find out wherein we differ from the Europeans in general. We want to see ourselves as others see us, and to see others as they see themselves. We are spying out the secrets of the other nationalities in the hope that we may learn more about our own essential Americanism. The enterprise is interesting and the result cannot but be instructive, if we make use of all the means of comparison which lie open to us. And in this discussion of national differences and of racial distinctions, perhaps nothing is more helpful than the consideration of national and racial types of humor.

Show me what a man laughs at, and I will tell you what manner of man he is. The deepest thinker, seeking to solve this problem of national individuality, would profit by a comparison of the comic papers that flourish in the several countries. He will find himself possest of precious

information after he has set over against each other the *Kladderadatsch* of the Germans and the *Charivari* of the French, the British *Punch or The London Charivari* and the American *Life* and *Puck.* Perhaps this comparison of humorous weeklies is of more immediate significance even than a contrasting of the great masters of the comic, of the creator of *Falstaff* with the creator of *Tartuffe*, of the chronicler of Mr. Pickwick with the chronicler of Tom Sawyer.

But, first of all, we must make again the needful distinction between two qualities often confounded because we have no fit names to keep them apart. We must again remind ourselves that humor is one thing and quite another that precious gift we have to call the sense-of-humor. Humor, itself, is positive; it is what makes us laugh. The sense-of-humor is negative; and by its possession we prevent others from laughing at us. The two gifts are as separate as may be; and they are not often to be found in the same man. More than one positive humorist, who has moved the world to inextinguishable mirth, has not had the negative ability which would restrain him from making himself ridiculous. In other words, the profest humorist is sometimes so lacking in the sense-of-humor that he takes himself too seriously, as Dickens did when he aired in public his private quarrel with the mother of his

children. Probably there are few situations more annoying and more humiliating than that in which a man finds himself when he discovers that he who has made his fellows laugh again and again has at last given them cause to laugh at him, rather than with him.

This invaluable sense-of-humor is an individual possession; it is in no ways national or racial. This negative quality can be found among the French and the Germans, as well as among the British and the Americans. But positive humor varies from one language to another. The *witz* of Berlin could be born only on the banks of the Spree; and the *esprit* of Paris flourishes best by the borders of the Seine. The "wheeze" of the London music-hall may fall flat in New York, just as the rapid-fire patter of the American variety-show may evoke only a blank stare in England. After all, the jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it. There is no profit in making a joke that is not taken; and no international clearing-house has yet been establisht for exchanging the merry jests of the several peoples. Often a quip which past current in the land of its birth is nailed to the counter as spurious when it ventures to cross the sea.

As George Eliot suggested, "a difference of taste in jests is a great strain on the affections"; and it may yet happen that a nation will see a

cause of war in the refusal of some other nation to accept its merry jests at their face value. The English insist that it needs a surgical operation to get a joke into the head of a Scotchman; but the Scotchman who happens to have the sense-of-humor can retort that the knife is needed only for an English joke and that the Scotch have a pawky wit of their own. So we Americans sometimes complain that the British are slow on the trigger in their apprehension of humor; but it is only our American humor that the British are sluggish in appreciating, not their own,—and also not the bolder and deeper humor which has universal currency because it does not bear the mint-mark of any one people. A friend of mine declares that explaining a joke to an Englishman is like trying to write on blotting paper; but it is only a very American joke which the Englishman needs to have expounded thus painfully.

In every country where the inhabitants have discovered the hygienic value of laughter, most of the merry jests which amuse them are local and temporary; and only a few are universal and durable in their appeal to the risibilities of mankind. What seems to us funny here to-day quite possibly will not seem funny to us here to-morrow; and it may not seem funny even now to anybody else anywhere else. Americans are

as prone to this ephemeral and evanescent joking as any other people; and we have no right to expect any other people to be amused by that which amuses us. We ought to reserve our displeasure until we find the foreigner unmoved to mirth by those finer specimens of our humor which transcend the accidents of American life and attain to the universality of abiding human nature. For example, we are fully justified in pitying any individual or any people who fails to see the fun in the early pages of 'Tom Sawyer' recording how that type of the eternal boy let the contract for whitewashing his aunt's fence. But perhaps we have no right really to look down on those who do not laugh at the 'Jumping Frog,' since that masterpiece of narrative is more emphatically American in its method, in the imperturbable gravity with which an impossible happening is set forth.

Many of the best jokes made by Americans might have been made by foreigners;—that is to say, they are not essentially American; they have little or no flavor of the soil. They are American specimens of humor and not specimens of American humor. When Colonel Higginson declared that Mr. Henry James was not a true cosmopolitan "because a true cosmopolitan is at home even in his own country," the witty remark had a point and a polish which may be described as

French in its felicity and which recalls to memory Voltaire's assertion that the English hanged an admiral now and then merely "to encourage the others." When Mr. Choate described woman as "an after-thought and a side-issue," he was uttering a witticism that might be attributed to any of the British wits, to Douglas Jerrold or to Sydney Smith. There was even a French dexterity in his answer to an impertinent question,—that if he could not be himself, he "would like to be Mrs. Choate's second husband." Indeed, it was perhaps this Gallic subtlety which was disconcerting to the casual Englishman who happened to hear the smart saying,—and who promptly askt, "Ah—but who was Mrs. Choate's second husband?" And this recalls the comment of another Englishman on another witticism made by an American, altho not characteristically American. The British stranger had quoted to him the clever remark that "the true purpose of the Waldorf-Astoria is to supply exclusiveness to the masses." He listened solemnly; he pondered gravely; and then a smile irradiated his face, "I see,—'exclusiveness to them asses!'—good, very good indeed!"

One of the wittiest of Americans was the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich, whose talk was continually lightened by flashes of fun. Yet many of his cleverest sayings were lacking in any es-

sential Americanism. When Matthew Arnold made his first visit to America, Aldrich invited the best talkers in Boston to dine with him and put Dr. Holmes on the right of his distinguished guest. The genial autocrat began dilating whimsically upon the possibility of meeting unexpected people. "What would you do," he askt at large, "if you were to meet a cannibal on Beacon Street?" And Aldrich promptly responded, "I think I should stop to pick an acquaintance." This was a merry jest that might have been made by a clever Briton, by Sheridan or by W. S. Gilbert. Again, when we were once chatting about a certain London man of letters who has read voluminously, putting abundant information into his many books and yet not growing in wisdom himself, Aldrich summed up the case by saying, "he is like a gas-pipe,—no richer for all the illumination it has conveyed." This might have been said by a Frenchman, by Voltaire or Beaumarchais. Now and again Aldrich's clever things had a suggestion of his native land in their unabasht exaggeration. He was once going to see Lawrence Barrett, and as he approacht the theater, he saw a festoon of arc-lights suspended over the entrance, and his quick comment was, "I see Barrett has hung up his footlights to dry!" When the tax-assessors raised the valuation of a country-house he once

had on the New England coast, where only a thin carpet of soil covered the rocks, Aldrich declared that if his tax was not reduced he would "roll up the place and carry it away!"

Lowell appreciated this imaginative enlargement of the mere fact, and he liked to think that it was not uncommon in New England. He once quoted the remark of a Yankee rustic that a certain negro was so black "that charcoal made a chalk-mark on him." In his own writing Lowell often exemplified this same magnifying power of overstatement for humorous effect, as when he declared that Carlyle was "forever calling down fire from heaven when he couldn't lay his hand on the match-box." When Mark Twain was staying at the Bear-and-Fox Inn of the Onteora Club, the rooms of which were divided off only by walls of burlap, he complained that the partitions were so thin that he could "hear the young lady in the next room change her mind." The late W. R. Travers once took the only vacant place in a Fifth Avenue omnibus, letting his son sit on his knee; and when a pretty girl got in and had to stand, he said, "J-Jack, g-g-get up and let that young lady have your s-s-seat."

An imaginative exaggeration, a trick of magniloquent overstatement, is distinctly characteristic of American humor; and yet we can find

the same inflated distortion of the fact in not a few foreigners. The Travers joke might have been made by Charles Lamb, for example, whose humor is often very American in its savor, and who described himself "a matter-of-lie man." And when we remember that Lamb also had an impediment in his speech, we almost wonder how it was that the Englishman did not anticipate the American's retort when a friend met him after his removal to New York and told him that he stuttered more than he had done in Baltimore:—"New York is a b-b-bigger place." The remark of Mark Twain about the young lady changing her mind is similar in its essential quality to a quip of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's. At a country-house he had unwillingly agreed to take an elderly lady for a walk and he was delighted when a sudden shower prevented their going out. After the rain ceased, the lady caught him sneaking thru a side door. "It has cleared up, Mr. Sheridan," she said. "Y-yes," he responded, "it has cleared up enough for one but not enough for two."

Sheridan was an Irishman, and this ingenious excuse, for all its American flavor, may be a specimen of Hibernian readiness. Perhaps this might even be taken as evidence in behalf of Mr. Taft's suggestion that the humor of the American race owes much to the plentiful infusion of the Irish

in our population. The suggestion is interesting and it may be valid; but it overlooks the fact that Celtic fun is rooted in melancholy, and flowers out of sadness, whereas the American is more light-hearted and care-free. We are optimistic almost to the verge of fatalism, while the Irish have ever a tear near the smile. Thackeray pointed out that the rollicking and boisterous tales of Lever and of Lover are fundamentally sorrowful, even if they are superficially laughter-provoking. This is not true of American humorous narratives, which may be grim enough at times, but which are only infrequently melancholy. There is no underlying sadness in the robust fun of the earlier Southern comic story-tellers, in Judge Longstreet's 'Georgia Scenes,' for example, altho there may be not a little of the crude violence and hard coldness of Smollett. There is scant melancholy in John Phœnix or in Artemus Ward, in Petroleum V. Nasby or in Orpheus C. Kerr, in Frank R. Stockton, or in Joel Chandler Harris. As for Josh Billings, he is primarily a wit rather than a humorist, a maker of maxims, a follower of La Rochefoucauld rather than of Rabelais, as the London *Spectator* showed when it translated some of his aphorisms out of his misfit orthography:—"It is easy to be a fool; many a man is a fool and doesn't know it."

It is true, of course, that there was a strain of

sadness in Lincoln, one of the foremost of American humorists and one of the most typical. And Mark Twain's fun is sustained by the deep seriousness of a strong nature, wherein pathos and humor are intertwined. His tale of the Blue Jay, for example, has a pathetic aspect, if we care so to consider it; and there is manly emotion firmly controlled in many a chapter of 'Huckleberry Finn' and 'Pudd'nhead Wilson.' But, after all, pathos is not melancholy; and Mark Twain has less of the sadness of Lincoln than he has of the unshakable commonsense of Franklin. In the beginning the author of 'Innocents Abroad' was a follower of John Phœnix; and the account of his ascent of Vesuvius is quite in the manner of the more elementary makers of comic-copy for the newspapers. Only after he had captured the ear of the public by this easy fun-making was it that Mark Twain found himself and that his genius ripened until he outgrew absolutely the journalistic laugh-makers with whom he was classed at first. And then he revealed at last the richness of his gift, which now gives him his assured position in the greater group headed by Cervantes and by Molière.

Mark Twain's humor is characteristically American in that it is founded on good humor. It represents a more advanced stage of civilization even than that of Cervantes, who callously

involved his noble hero in unshrinking practical jokes, which seem to us now quite unworthy of him. In primitive communities the sense of fun is ill-developt and it is aroused most easily by physical misadventure. To the savage the simplest retort is the swift hurtling of the stone-ax. If that reaches its aim, it accomplishes its purpose more satisfactorily than the keenest epigram. Even now the uncivilized among us, who laugh over the crude comic-supplements of the Sunday papers, take delight in the misfortunes of hapless caricatures of our common humanity. In most of these figures of fun there is really little American humor, but only the unhesitating brutality of an earlier stage of human progress. Such contorted parodies of mankind have no right to exist in the era of the telephone and the electric light and the aeroplane; they are survivals from the stone-age, when our remote ancestors had not yet forgotten the tricks inherited from progenitors accustomed to hang suspended by their prehensile tails from the boughs of the forest primeval.

American humor, the humor that is truly typical of the American race, is not cold-hearted, even tho it can be grim on occasion. Grim it certainly is, now and again, grim in spite of its geniality. Consider, for example, John Hay's 'Mystery of Gilgal':

They carved in a way that all admired,
Till Blood drawed iron at last, and fired.
It took Seth Bludso 'twixt the eyes,
  Which caused him great surprize.

They piled the stiffs outside the door;
They made, I reckon, a cord or more.
Girls went that winter, as a rule,
  Alone to spellin'-school.

Grimness there is again in Eugene Field's 'Little Peach':

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew,—
  Boo hoo!

What of that peach of the emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew?
Ah, well, its mission on earth is thru.
  Adieu!

But the grimness of American humor is only occasional, and its geniality is almost always more evident. Indeed, geniality and imaginative exaggeration may be taken as the chief of its essential qualities. The latter characteristic can be found in Benjamin Franklin almost as freely as it is discoverable in Mark Twain. There is the same playful irony that we note in the 'Stolen White Elephant' to be seen a century earlier in the letter which Franklin wrote to a London newspaper in 1765, gravely declaring that "the

very tails of the American sheep are so laden with wool, that each has a little car or wagon to support and keep it from trailing on the ground." It is in this same letter that Franklin commented on an assertion which had appeared in the British newspapers to the effect that the Canadians were making preparations for the cod and whale fishery in the Upper Lakes. "Ignorant people may object that the Upper Lakes are fresh, and that cod and whales are salt-water fish; but let them know, Sir, that cod, like other fish when attackt by their enemies, fly into any water where they can be safest; that whales when they have a mind to eat cod, pursue them wherever they fly; and that the grand leap of the whale in the chase up the Falls of Niagara is esteemed, by all who have seen it, as one of the finest spectacles in nature. Really, Sir, the world is grown too incredulous."

The fine gravity in this logical analysis of an arrant impossibility, which we note here in Franklin and again in Mark Twain, is not infrequent in our humorists; but it is not an American invention. Its analogs can be discovered in Fielding, and more particularly in Swift, in his 'Modest Proposal' and in his defense of Christianity. And one might even replevin earlier examples from earlier authors of earlier languages,—from Aristophanes, for instance. In the 'Frogs,' when Bacchus is going down to

Hades with his servant Xanthias, they meet a dead man on his way to the Styx and they offer him a small sum to be the bearer of their burdens. But the dead man scorns the insignificant fee, saying, "I'd sooner be alive first!" Yet even if there is here a Greek anticipation of American exaggeration and even if irony was employed by Swift and Fielding very much as it has been employed by Franklin and Mark Twain, none the less must it be admitted that this irony and this exaggeration are more common in American literature than in any other; and they are more characteristic of our brand of humor.

Where did we get these characteristics? Not from the Irish, whose humor is of another quality. Not from the Puritans, whose humor has not survived abundantly enough for us to know it well. And yet it may have been brought across the ocean in the original package, since we find something not unlike it in England in the spacious days of Elizabeth and in the decadent years of her more pedantic successor. There is a largeness of vision, a buoyancy of spirit, an abounding hopefulness, a superb self-confidence in the England of the early seventeenth century which we cannot help noting also in the America of the early twentieth century. In many attributes of his character, in his exuberant vitality, in his attitude toward life, the modern American seems

to be a little more closely akin to the bolder Elizabethan than is the modern Englishman. At least, we seem to have preserved rather more of the forthputting of that expansive era, both in language and in literature. Indeed, it would not be difficult to make out a suggestive list of the points of resemblance between Ben Jonson and Mark Twain, for example. *Sir Epicure Mammon* in the 'Alchemist' is a figure that might be easily paralleled in the works of the most American of our authors; and *Meercraft*, in the 'Devil is an Ass,' urges plausibly a variety of fantastic schemes for making money quite in the manner of Colonel Mulberry Sellers. If less deliberately poetic than Ben, Mark has not less imagination or a less vigorous grasp on reality. He is less formal and less rigid; he is gayer and more frolicsome; but he has the same sturdy sincerity and the same artistic conscientiousness. It is perhaps because he thus relates us to our origins that Mark Twain is the foremost of American humorists.

American humor is also good humor, as we have seen; it is generally genial, even if it is sometimes grim; it is often ironic; and it tends toward imaginative exaggeration. The humor of other peoples may reveal, now and again, one or another of these characteristics; but we seem to hold the patent on the combination.

(1908.)

THE SPEECH OF THE PEOPLE

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IT happened that a chance number of an important electrical review came into the hands of a professor in the English department of a leading American university not long ago; and one of the prominent advertisements caught his eye at once. The advertiser vaunted the merits of his "separately excited boosters." The professor lowered the paper for a moment and wondered vaguely what manner of thing a "separately excited booster" might be. First of all, what was a booster? Secondly, why should it get excited? And finally, why need it be excited separately? He was moved to ask a colleag in the electrical department, who easily explained the meaning of the puzzling words and assured him that they would be understood at once by all the experts engaged in practical electrical work, however obscure they might be even to a profest student of the language, ignorant of the latest developments in this special art.

Within a few days thereafter the professor chanced to hear other phrases drawn from the rapidly increasing vocabulary of the electricians. He was told by a war-correspondent who had re-

cently been to the front with the Russian army, that vodka was a "live-wire." He was informed that on a certain occasion a lady of uncertain temper was "off her trolley." He listened to an indignant friend declaring that an objectionable person had been so very annoying that the speaker was ready "to throw him down on the third rail." And then he recalled the stirring stanza of the bard of the British Empire, in which Mr. Kipling declared the readiness of the 'Native Born' on the shores of the seven seas to drink

> To the hearth of our people's people—
>   To her well-plowed windy sea,
> To the hush of our dread high-altar
>   Where the Abbey makes us We;
> To the grist of the slow-ground ages,
>   To the gain that is yours and mine—
> To the Bank of the Open Credit,
>   To the Power-house of the Line!

And when he had assembled these things in his memory, the professor of English saw their significance at last. Here under his hand was new evidence of the growth of the language, of its constant expansion, of its vitality and of its health. Here was proof again that the English language was abundantly alive, and that however firmly rooted it might be in the past it was forever stretching out fresh branches for the future. Its work was not done; and it was keeping itself

fit for the larger duties that loomed before it. Being alive and not dead, it is in constant change, adjusting itself to the varying circumstances, continually making itself ready to meet the necessities of the several peoples that speak it.

The English language is not made; it is a-making now. It is not finisht and complete, like Latin; nor is it dead, like Latin. It is alive and growing, and therefore it is not yet fixt and determined; it is ever flexible, yielding, resourceful, —as it has always been since its earliest beginnings. It is now the same tongue that the great King Alfred spoke, and yet it is not the same, for it has outgrown its swaddling-clothes and attained to the full stature of a man. It was in the infancy of English that Alfred achieved the marvelous literary feat of creating a prose style, a feat which, so Mr. Frederic Harrison asserts, can be explained only "by remembering that the language which Alfred spoke and wrote was not exactly early English, nor middle English, much less the highly composite and tessellated mosaic which we call the latest and contemporary English. It was but the bony skeleton of our English, what the Palatine mount of Romulus was to imperial Rome, what Wessex was to the present empire of the Queen. But it was the bones of our common tongue; it was the bones with the marrow in them; ready to

be clothed in flesh and equipt with sinews and nerves. But this simple and unsophisticated tongue the genius of our Saxon hero so used and molded that he founded a prose style, and taught the English race to trust to their own mother-tongue from the first; to be proud of it, to cultivate it, to record it in the deeds of their ancestors, and to hand it on as a national possession for their children."

Alfred seems to have had an intuitive knowledge of the fact which later philological science has not yet succeeded in getting generally accepted—the fact that every language is born on the lips of those who use it and that it lives in common speech and in daily use, rather than in grammar and in dictionary. Language was spoken long before it was written; and our noble English loses something of its vivacity and even of its vitality when at last it is written down, when it is forced to make its appeal to the eye rather than to the ear. There is a freshness about the spoken word which the written word, and more especially the printed word, has often lost. This freshness the real masters of speech are forever striving to recapture; and their writings are direct and vigorous and inviting in proportion as they succeed in this endeavor. It was Lowell, a scholar of the widest reading and a most adroit wielder of literary allusion and illustration, who once told a

friend frankly that "boys and blackguards have always been my masters in language."

Most of us have failed to lay firm hold of this principle,—that the spoken word is primary and that the written word is secondary only. Failing to grasp it, we fail to see its consequences; and we are likely to fall into the common error of accepting a grammar as a code of rules which must be obeyed, and we are prone to hold up a dictionary as a final authority to settle all questions of usage in orthography and pronunciation. But the grammarian has no warrant to set up as a lawgiver; and he has no commission to do more than declare what he has ascertained as to the structure and the condition of the language at that special period of its changing history which he has undertaken to explain. It is as a record of facts and of tendencies that a grammar is valuable; and its value is diminisht in proportion as the grammarian mistakes his office and risks himself in dogmatic judgments. And as a grammar has no authority in itself, so also a dictionary has no authority of its own. Its value lies in the accuracy with which it has recorded the facts. As a President of the Modern Language Association stated it plainly a few years ago, the trained scholars look upon a dictionary simply as "a more or less incomplete list of the words and phrases used in a language in some period of its

life, with definitions (often inexact) of these words and phrases."

The dictionary, however ample, however frequent its supplements, must always remain "more or less incomplete," for the language keeps on growing and expanding and responding to the unexpected needs of those who use it even while the most recent supplement is getting itself into print. And there is need also to emphasize the fact that the language has grown and expanded so abundantly that no dictionary-maker has ever dared to attempt to include all the words within his reach. The special vocabularies of the several arts and sciences are enormously distended; and only the more important words of these special vocabularies can be included even in the dictionaries which are planned to extend to several volumes.

The special terms of the electrician,—such as "live-wire" and "third-rail" and "separately excited booster,"—are recorded only in part even in the lexicons of that science. The special terms of the stage and the theater were carefully collected a score of years ago by an expert for one of the foremost of American dictionaries; and they proved to be so many that it was possible to insert only the most significant and the most likely to be lookt for. These theatrical terms were not evanescent slang; they were the technical words used with absolute exactness by the thou-

sands of men and women connected with the stage. Some of them were known also to the theater-going public, such as "box-office" and "return-check," "act-drop" and "stage-hands"; but many more—such as "sky-borders" and "cut-wing," "bunch-lights" and "star-trap," "raking-piece" and "billboard-ticket"—would probably not convey any clear and definite idea to the most of those who throng into the theater.

It is from these special vocabularies that the language is constantly enlarged and enricht. From these special vocabularies, familiar only to the practitioner of the several arts, certain words and terms and phrases are snatcht up into general use. For a season they may be lookt upon as intruders, as little better than slang; and not a few of them fail to establish themselves in time, unable to make good a right of domicile in the select lexicon of literary usage. But some of them persist and justify their claims to acceptance even by the fastidious. Nothing more clearly indicates the taste and the tact of an author than the way in which he deals with these novel locutions, some of them barbaric and to be rejected without question, some of them needless, and a few of them fresh and terse and significant. The adroit writer cannot do better than accept the advice proffered by one of the sagest of Molière's characters,—*Ariste*, in the 'School for Husbands'

—who declared that it is best to follow the fashion slowly in language as well as in clothes.

And another comic dramatist, Ben Jonson, who often rivals Molière in his common sense, put the matter pithily as was his wont, when he asserted that "custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the public stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining, nor fetch words from the extreme and uttermost ages, since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newest of the past language, is the best."

The French, who have less initiative than the twin-peoples that speak English, have yielded authority to the French Academy, founded by Richelieu to act as the guardian and trustee of the language. Whenever a word or a phrase has been past upon by the Academy and admitted to citizenship, then its validity is placed beyond all question. But there is no French dictionary, even if it is edited by a member of the Academy, which does not include thousands of locutions

not yet warranted by the approval of the Academy as a whole. And there are few of the members of the Academy who do not individually use unhesitatingly a host of words which they collectively have not yet sanctioned. Thus it is that the Academy lags far behind the best usage as certified by its own members. Thus also we see how futile was Richelieu's effort to confide the care of the language to any body of men however competent or however distinguisht. No dikes can be set to the overflowing forces which are ever broadening the common speech; at least, no artificial embankments are effective for long. The sole restraint must be sought in that common sense, that tact, and that taste of wise writers, in which Ben Jonson and Molière wisely put their trust.

There is significance in the fact that not a few of the members of the French Academy employ freely many phrases not approved by the august tribunal to which they belong. Many authors of the greatest scholarly distinction have delighted to keep their talk vigorous, even if their writing was ultra-refined. Tennyson had a relish for the homely vernacular and used the plainest words, on occasion, finding a keen delight in their unadorned directness. He told Carlyle once that if any man-on-horseback, any masterful Duke William should appear in England to curb per-

sonal liberty, "he'd soon feel my knife in his guts." And in Professor Peck's biography of Prescott we are told of the fondness of that stately and sonorous historian for the frank colloquialisms of his section and of his time. No doubt Prescott found in these snatches of slang a wholesome corrective for that eighteenth century grandiloquence toward which he was tempted by his early training.

The biographer points out that in Prescott's first book, the 'History of Ferdinand and Isabella,' publisht in 1837, the historian "had not yet emancipated himself from that formalism which had been inherited from the eighteenth century writers, and which Americans, with the wonted conservatism of provincials, retained long after Englishmen had begun to write with naturalness and simplicity." And in the preface to the second series of the 'Biglow Papers,' written thirty years after Prescott's first history, Lowell asserted "that the great vice of American writing and speaking" was a studied want of simplicity, that we were in danger of coming to look on our mother-tongue "as a dead language, to be sought in the grammar and dictionary rather than in the heart." Lowell went on to say that "it is only from its roots in the living generation that a language can be reinforced with fresh vigor for its needs; what may be called a literary dialect

grows ever more and more pedantic and foreign, till it becomes at last as unfitting a vehicle for living thought as monkish Latin." Elsewhere in the same introduction Lowell declared that "there is death in the dictionary," and that "true vigor and heartiness of phrase do not pass from page to page, but from man to man, when the brain is kindled and the lips suppled by downright living interests."

After praising Lincoln's "truly masculine English, classic because it was of no special period, and level at once to the highest and the lowest of his countrymen," Lowell voiced his scorn of Congressional grandiloquence. In the two score years since Lowell wrote this indictment, there has been an evident improvement in the directness of our public speaking and in the general appreciation of directness. Bombast there is in plenty still, and talking for Buncombe also; but the evil influence of Webster's orotund manner, wholly unsuited to men less amply framed than he, seems to be passing away. Even if we have now no public speaker who can attain at will to the noble and lofty simplicity of Lincoln, there is satisfaction in recalling that a recent Secretary of State was the author of the racy 'Pike County Ballads' and that a recent President of the United States is the author of the vivid and picturesque 'Winning of the West.' The style

of Mr. Hay and of Mr. Roosevelt, each excellent in its own fashion, is the style of a gentleman and of a scholar, no doubt; but it is also the style of a man,—of a man, not stifled in a library, but alert and alive by reason of friendly contact with his fellow-men. Such also is the style of more than one of our younger university presidents, in whose public utterances we find an approach at least to the ideal "speech of the people in the mouth of the scholar."

It is pleasant also to note that the two authors who now have the widest popularity among the peoples that speak English, the two writers of our language whose fame seems most solidly establisht, Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling, are both of them anxious always to get into the printed page as much as possible of the elemental energy of the spoken word. Both of them are verbal craftsmen of surpassing skill, bending words to their bidding; and both of them are ever on the alert to avoid the merely bookish and the emptily literate. It is to be noted also that Mark Twain is an American and that Rudyard Kipling still reveals the influence exerted on him in his youth by the American story-tellers from whom he learnt his trade when he was serving his apprenticeship in India. Perhaps this may be taken as evidence that the writers of the United States have arrived at last at a

better understanding of the true principles of rhetoric. They seem to have renounced the long-tailed Johnsonese, most ponderous and most pedantic of dialects, in which our fathers delighted only half a century ago.

Perhaps this improvement in American style is due in part to the disestablishment of the dictionary as a final authority and to the discrowning of the grammar as the sole monarch of all it surveyed. Perhaps it is due to the growing perception that the spoken language is franker, fresher and freer than the written. The old grammars were absurdly arbitrary and self-sufficient in the rules they laid down and in the way they sought to shackle the healthy growth of the language. They were guilty of the unpardonable sin of declaring that Shakspere and the translators of the English Bible had committed faults of grammar, as if nice customs did not curtsey to great kings. These old-fashioned grammarians arrogated to themselves the privilege of saying that this usage was right and that usage wrong, instead of contenting themselves with the humbler task of recording the several usages which they might find in the pages of the masters of English. A comparison of two American grammars, Lindley Murray's and the more recent volume by Professor G. R. Carpenter, will serve to show how far we have advanced, for the later author is modest and

tentative where the earlier is arrogant and domineering.

The trouble with these outworn grammars and rhetorics was not merely that they laid an interdict on certain locutions, but that their tone was always prohibitive. They kept on declaring that this or that must not be done. Their advice was mainly negative; and thus it tended always to cramp and to stiffen. They ordered us to shun double negatives and split infinitives and final prepositions;—as if mere avoidance of error would ever give sinew to a phrase. They set up false standards; and the result was that "schoolmaster's English" became a term of reproach, for it described a style juiceless and nerveless, a style unfit for hard work, a style which was as remote as possible from the terse vigor of actual speech. These false standards are not yet wholly cast out; and there are still sold here in the United States every year thousands of text-books which lay down rules of no real validity and which tell the student what not to say, instead of helping him to say what he wants. But altho this is unfortunately true, it is true also that in no department of American education has the improvement been more obvious than in the teaching of English. Attention is now rarely called to the "grammatical errors" of Shakspere; and the callow student is not now puft up with the conceit

that he knows more about the English language than the mighty masters who made it what it is.

Three centuries ago, Samuel Daniel, the poet-laureate of King James, made a prophetic inquiry:—

> And who in time knows whither we may vent
> The treasures of our tongue? to what strange shores
> The gain of our best glory may be sent
> To enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
> What world in the yet unformed Occident
> May come refined with accents that are ours.

Not only in the "unformed Occident" but on the strange shores of the Orient also are the treasures of our tongue now enriching nations unknown when Daniel rimed these lines. And here it is that English is favored above all other languages, that it is spoken not merely in a single compact country but by two great peoples with their many outposts on all the corners of the earth. There is thus the less danger that the language may stagnate. There is thus a far greater variety of sources of refreshment and renewal. The English language is the mother-tongue of the British and of the Americans, of the Canadians and of the Australians; and new words and new meanings are being contributed constantly from every one of these sources of supply.

Nor is there any danger of contamination in this multitude of contributors, all loyal to the

same ideal. Professor Lounsbury has stated the governing principle with his customary clearness and common sense. The final decision as to propriety of usage and as to all new words and phrases, he tells us, "rests not with individuals—neither with men of letters, however prominent, nor with scholars, however learned. It is in the hands of the whole body of cultivated users of speech. They have an unerring instinct as to its necessities. They are a great deal wiser than any of their self-constituted advisers, however prominent. Fortunately, too, they have the ability to carry their wishes into effect. They know what they need, and they can neither be persuaded out of it nor bullied out of it. . . . If, in spite of clamor, they retain a word or construction, it may generally be taken for granted that it supplies a demand which really exists."

(1905.)

ENGLISH AS A WORLD-LANGUAGE

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FIVE hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, fifteen hundred years ago, every man of education could talk freely and easily with every other man of education in Latin. It was perhaps his native speech or he might have had to learn it; but he was not held to be an educated man until he had acquired it. Even after Latin had ceased to be a mother-tongue, and when it was spoken only by those who had achieved it by hard labor, it was still the language used in diplomacy, in the church, by men of letters and by philosophers and scientific investigators. Out of the fragments of the Roman Empire new nations had compacted themselves slowly, each with its own tongue; they asserted their independence; they warred with one another; and yet the Latin language, no longer native to any one of them, was the chief means by which they communicated with each other. Latin long sufficed even for their men of letters. As Lowell asserted, "till Dante's time the Italian poets thought no language good enough to put their nothings into but Latin,—and indeed a dead tongue was the best for dead thoughts,—but Dante found the common speech of Florence, in

which men bargained and scolded and made love, good enough for him, and out of the world around him made a poem such as no Roman ever sang." A little later Chaucer chose the common speech of London for the telling of his tales. And yet after Dante had descended into Hell and after the Canterbury pilgrims had gone forth, Bacon put his great book into Latin and Milton wrote not a few poems in that dead tongue. For a century after 'Paradise Lost,' Latin was still held to be the most fit and proper vehicle for the systems of the philosophers and for the discoveries of the scientists. The language of Cicero lingered as a very convenient means of communication for the educated men of all countries; and yet at last the forces of nationality and of race were too strong for it. For more than two centuries now men of letters have exprest themselves in their mother-tongue, and men of science have used each his native language to set forth their contributions to the sum of human knowledge. For more than fifteen centuries Latin had been truly a world-language, only in the end to surrender its supremacy, thru no fault of its own, but by sheer force of circumstances.

For several centuries there seemed to be a likelihood that the place of Latin might be taken by French. Chappuzeau, a strolling hack-writer of Paris, recorded in 1674 that in his travels in all

ports of Christendom, it had been easy for him to remark "that a prince then, with the sole French language, which has spread everywhere, has the same advantages as had Mithridates with twenty-two different tongues." Voltaire, in the dedicatory letter prefixed to his 'Age of Louis XIV.' asserted that "the French language had become almost the universal tongue"; and for this he gave credit to the Grand Monarch. Even in Germany the great Frederick preferred the more polisht speech of his French enemies to his own ruder vernacular; and he even wrote his needless verses in French. Gibbon, whose earliest book had been composed in French, hesitated whether to choose that foreign idiom or his own native speech as the language in which to write the 'Decline and Fall,'—the first volume of which appeared in the very year when those who had English for a mother-tongue were separated into two nations. The intensely Italian Alfieri actually composed his earlier plays in French, so complete was the acceptance of that language among men of letters in other countries. So late as 1783 the Academy of Berlin proposed as a subject for a prize-essay, the 'Universality of the French Language'; and the reward was won by the brilliant Rivarol, who discust first the reasons why his own language was universally accepted, and then inquired whether the language merited

this and whether it would preserve its dominant position.

There is no doubt that the French language is well adapted for general use. It has exceeding clarity and precision and point; it has inherited many of the best qualities of the Latin it bid fair to supersede. But it has failed to retain its apparent universality. Within a century after Voltaire and Frederick, after Gibbon and Rivarol, French had lost a large part of its pre-eminence. This was thru no failing of the language itself, since its merits remained what they had been. The spread of a language and its general acceptance depend very little upon its own qualities and very largely upon the qualities of the race that has it for a mother-tongue and upon the commanding position this race holds in the struggle for economic mastery.

Before the first quarter of the nineteenth century was past, it began to be seen that the French nation did not bulk as big in the eyes of the other peoples as it had done a hundred years earlier; and by the end of the last quarter it was obvious that the French had ceased to expand and that the German Empire was more powerful, the Russian Empire also, while the greatest development had taken place in the two branches of the English-speaking race, the British Empire and the United States. The facility and the felicity

of the French language, the range and the weight of French literature, might for a little postpone the inevitable; but the universality of the French language had ceased to be a fact. Even while Voltaire and Frederick, Gibbon and Rivarol, were still alive, the French had let India and Canada slip from their hands; and thereafter their language could no longer make good its claim to universal acceptance. For a brief space only, for perhaps a century, French had seemed about to take the place of Latin as a world-language. This hope has now long since departed. French may still be the second language of most educated men in the United States and in Great Britain; and for a little while longer it may retain this position, because the rich treasury of French literature amply rewards every one for the labor needed to acquire the key that unlocks it. Yet even in the English-speaking world French is being hard-pusht by German, which is more valuable commercially. And in Italy there are beginning to be signs that French is barely holding its own against English.

Beyond all question this failure of French to establish itself as a world-language in succession to Latin is a misfortune. It is a misfortune not only to the French themselves but also to the Germans and to us who speak English. The advantages of a world-language are indisputable.

Without it every man must be content to express himself in his own tongue; and every man who needs to know what has been said upon the subject in which he is especially interested must of necessity master half a dozen other languages. And this is the disadvantage of the individual only; even more far-reaching and significant are the disadvantages of the several communities who have each only the speech of their own stock. In the absence of a common tongue they may fail to understand one another; and misunderstandings may lead to bickerings and bickerings may bring them to open strife. So long as French held its universality, even if that universality was not complete, it served as a national speech for the French themselves and it was also the second language of all educated men in which they could communicate without constraint, altho they might reserve each of them his own mother-tongue for all the ordinary uses of life and for self-expression in literature.

There is no longer any probability that any one of the leading languages will drive out any of the others. Is there any possibility that any one of them can succeed to the position of French as this second language of all educated men? Or is there any possibility of the world-wide acceptance of some artificial language, which shall arouse no international jealousy and which all races

will acquire as the best medium for communication with each other?

Of these artificial languages there is no lack. Volapük had a fleeting vogue a few years ago and Esperanto to-day has its hundred of advocates. These invented idioms appeal strongly to many who feel the need of a world-language and who fear the impossibility of the general adoption of any one of the national tongues. Many there are who find themselves forced to consider the practicability of one or another of the artificial languages. So urgent is the question in their minds that they have establisht a Delegation for the Choice of an International Language. Adhesions to this Delegation have been received from two or three hundred organizations of one kind or another,—academies, chambers of commerce, scientific societies and the like. The Delegation has been hailed as "a perfectly practical solution of something about which many have dreamed to no purpose."

A student of history may be permitted to doubt whether the recommendation of any Delegation will really bring us nearer to a practical solution. Hitherto large bodies of men have never been willing to take the trouble to acquire a language merely for its own sake. A language without a literature is sadly handicapt; and no artificial language is ever likely to have a litera-

ture of its own. Poetry especially must be sustained by emotion; and genuine emotion expresses itself inevitably in the mother-tongue. The Latin poems of Petrarch and of Milton are pitifully inferior in all that takes poetry home to the hearts of men. Even a great poet is not likely to write great poetry in any language in which he has not "bargained and scolded and made love"; and the greatest poetry is likely to be very close to the common speech and to choose for its own the words of the hearth and of the market-place. Will anybody ever use any invented dialect by the fireside and when he goes courting? Will children baby-talk in any book-made vocabulary? Will any mother ever croon a lullaby over her cradled child in Esperanto? Will schoolmasters thruout the world combine to instruct youth in a language without a past and with only a doubtful future? And can any language made to order in the study ever possess the vigor and the variety of a language which has been evolved slowly thru the ages in response to the needs of men, like a tool shaping itself slowly to the hand that wields it?

It needs to be said also that even if any artificial language had all the merits claimed for it by its inventors, we should be justified in doubting whether it had any real prospect of expansion and adoption. For not by its own merits does

a language prosper and extend its domain thruout the world, but by the merits of the stock that speaks it. The swords of the Roman legions and the prowess of the Roman proconsuls carried Latin from the Pillars of Hercules to the cataracts of the Nile, and not the noble dignity of the Ciceronian syntax. The swift courage of great generals and the wily intrigues of adroit diplomatists pusht French into the foremost place, and not the ease and clarity of Molière's sentences. The fate of French, like the fate of Latin, was wholly independent of the specific qualities of that speech.

"A language cannot be made either to improve or degenerate of itself," said Professor Lounsbury at the Congress of Arts and Sciences held at St. Louis to commemorate the centenary of the yielding up by the French of that Mississippi valley they had once taken for their own. A language is "nothing but the reflex of the spirit and aims of the men who employ it, and it will rise or fall in accordance with their intellectual and moral condition. Its continued existence, therefore, depends solely upon the fact whether the men to whom it is an inheritance are cultivated enough to enrich its literature, virtuous enough to elevate and maintain its character, and strong enough to uphold and extend its sway." And Professor Lounsbury added a further sugges-

tion of high significance: "it is a question whether under modern conditions any language can be sure of continued existence which does not have behind it the support of a great nationality." If this may be said about a living speech, born on the lips of men, a mother-tongue first lispt at a mother's knee, what chance is there for an artificial language, put together in a library, bare of all literature and borne up by no nationality whatever?

In Du Bellay's 'Defence and Illustration of the French Language,' the poet declared loftily that "the same natural law which commands each of us to defend the place of his birth, obliges us also to guard the dignity of our tongue." But who will ever care to guard the dignity of any of these made-to-order languages? Who will ever feel the words of these manufactured vocabularies rising to his lips involuntarily in the hour of need? When the laws of a powerful nation begin to be written in one of these contrived dialects, when its dictionary and its grammar serve satisfactorily for the customary ritual of marriages and of funerals, when countless children cry aloud in the night and use its words to call their mothers, when the thousands of sailors on a mighty fleet and the hundreds of thousands of soldiers in a mighty army shout it in the heat of battle, then and then only may the advocates of

that artificial language begin to take hope. Then and then only may they feel justified in looking forward with confidence. And until then the rest of us can go about our daily duties disregarding their assertions and their appeals.

To say this is not to deny that one or another of these artificial tongues may not serve certain of the humbler purposes of commerce, and that some men may use it in bargaining, even if they do not feel it fit for love-making.

But the need of a world-language is as obvious as ever, even if the futility of any artificial tongue is equally evident. And if the coming world-language cannot be made artificially, it must be one of the existing tongues, already spoken by millions of people. A world-language may be but a dream; but it may be a reality of the future. And if the coming generations are to be possest of this inestimable boon, which of the living tongues will achieve this universal acceptance? It is easy to put the question; and it is impossible to give the answer. Yet it is not difficult to point out certain probabilities. We may dismiss French at the start; it has had its chance and lost it. We may regret the fact but we cannot deny it. The French have been beaten in the race for expansion by those who speak German, and by us who speak English. There will soon be twice as many men and women having German for a

mother-tongue as now have French for their native speech. There are already almost three times as many men speaking English as there are speaking French.

The possibilities of growth and expansion still lie boundless before English. It has already the support not of one great nationality only but of two. It is spoken by more people than speak its two chief rivals together; and its rate of increase is more rapid than either of theirs. The two nations who claim English as their birthright are at least as abundant in energy, in enterprise, and in determination as the members of any other race. It possesses a splendid literature, holding its own in comparison with Greek and with French, lacking certain of their characteristics, no doubt, but making up for these by qualities of its own with which they are less richly endowed. This literature reveals no hint of decay or decadence in the present. In the nineteenth century the British branch of it can withstand comparison with the French literature of the same period, while the American branch can hardly be held inferior to the German literature contemporary with it. Already is English appealing to certain authors of the smaller races,—for example, Maarten Maartens, the Dutchman, and Joseph Conrad, the Pole,—who have chosen it as the vehicle of their literature in preference to their

own native idioms of narrower appeal,—just as the Scot Hamilton and the Italian Galiani formerly preferred French. It seems to be about to enter on the favored fortune predicted for it early in the nineteenth century by Jacob Grimm, who declared that English has "a just claim to be called a language of the world; and it appears to be destined, like the English race, to a higher and broader sway in all quarters of the earth."

Jacob Grimm was a large-hearted and open-minded man. He stands in markt contrast to another German who is now temporarily domiciled in one of the smaller towns of New England, and who seems to fear that the acceptance of a world-language would crowd out the national tongues and force an abandonment of the native speech, such as the Russians have attempted in Poland and in Finland. This German has shrilly asserted that "the acceptance of any language, were it English or French or Spanish, German or Dutch, Russian or Japanese, would immediately not only crush the pride of the other nations but would give to the favored people such an enormous advantage in the control of the political world and such immeasurable preference in the world's markets that no healthy nation would consent to it before its downfall." This might be an important statement, if, by the acceptance of one tongue as a world-language we meant only

the enforced or recognized adoption of that speech. But no one has been so foolish as to suggest anything of the sort.

A century ago French was almost accepted as a world-language because it had become the second language of every educated man; and because a book in French was accessible to all men of education everywhere. To predict the possible acceptance of English as a world-language means no more than this,—that English bids fair to become the second language of all educated men everywhere—whether their native speech is French or German, Spanish or Italian, Russian or Japanese.

If this shall come to pass it will need no national edict; it will not have to be registered by any national decree; and it can be delayed by no national pride, for it will have been brought about by sheer force of circumstance, by the march of events against which emperors are powerless even to protest. Whether any one of the living tongues is ever to win acceptance as the second language of educated men, as the highly desirable world-language of international communication, can be decided only by time; and no man may lift the veil of the future. But if any one of the living tongues is to achieve this distinction and to serve this useful purpose, that tongue is most likely to be English. We who speak English

may be eager to help in bringing this about and to hasten it; but we can do little or nothing. Those who speak rival tongues may be determined to prevent the spread of our speech; but they will have little ability even to delay it. If it should come to pass, this will be only because the acceptance of English was inevitable.

If English should take this commanding position, it would not be because of the merits of the language itself; and yet the language happens to be well fitted for the duties which seem to lie before it. Indeed, English is quite as well qualified to serve as a world-language as Latin or as French. Undeniably it lacks certain of the special advantages of each of these two supple and ample tongues; but it has also special advantages of its own. Perhaps the most obvious of these advantages is the surpassing wealth of its double vocabulary. To quote again from Jacob Grimm, the perfected development of English "issued from a marvelous union of the two noblest tongues of Europe, the Germanic and the Romanic." And Grimm also asserted that "in richness, in compact adjustment of parts, and in pure intelligence, none of the living languages can be compared with it,—not even our own German, which must cast off many imperfections before it can boldly enter on its career."

It must be noted also that the varied vocabu-

lary of English, partly Teutonic and partly Romanic, is likely to be nourisht and refresht in the future, in consequence of the scattering of the English-speaking race on all the shores of all the seven seas, whereby new and expressive words, as well as terse vernacular phrases, are constantly called into existence to meet unexpected needs, the best of these being sooner or later lifted into the statelier speech of literature. It is not a danger to the future of the English language, but a positive gain, that there are in existence hosts of Americanisms and Briticisms, even of Canadianisms and Australianisms, serving temporary and local uses in current speech, but all of them ready for a larger utility whenever the loftier English of the library has need for just these vigorous terms. The outposts of the Anglo-Saxon peoples are proving-grounds for the seedlings of English speech. And English has thus an advantage denied, so far at least, to any other language.

Yet another advantage English has over all its rivals, modern and ancient. It has shed the primitive complexities of syntax which still cumber most of the other living languages, and more especially German. English is almost a grammarless tongue. The genders of English nouns are the natural genders of the things they name, whereas in French, for example, the sun

is masculine and the moon feminine, while in German, the sun is feminine and the moon masculine. In German a maiden is absurdly neuter. Moreover, English nouns are not declined and English adjectives do not have to shift their terminations to accord with their nouns in case and gender. And in English, once more, verbs are conjugated in the simplest fashion by means of uniform auxiliaries. Altho scholars of an older generation, like Professor Goldwin Smith, may lament this "lack of the power of declension and conjugation," linguistic students of the younger school, Professor Jespersen, for one, see a long step forward in this simplification of the machinery of communication. They assert that English is thus revealed as the most advanced of all languages. Probably it was this characteristic of our speech that Grimm had in mind when he declared English to be unrivalled "in compact adjustment of parts and in pure intelligence." Just as the steam-engine of to-day has been simplified by the omission of useless parts and just as all other machines have been reduced to their necessary elements, so the English language, the verbal machine of a practical race, has got rid of the manifold grammatical intricacies it found it could do without.

In one respect, and in one respect only, is English inferior to the other modern languages.

Its spelling is still barbarously complex. Its orthography is illogical and chaotic. It is the easiest of languages to learn by word of mouth; and it is the hardest of languages to acquire from the printed page. The spelling of Italian and the spelling of Spanish present no difficulties to the child or to the foreigner. The spelling of French and the spelling of German cannot be so highly commended; but their condition is far better than the condition of English; and both in France and in Germany action has already been taken to improve the national orthography, to reduce it to rule, to regulate the analogies and to omit the useless letters which merely distend certain words. The two peoples who speak English like to regard themselves as eminently practical; and now that the example has been set by their two chief commercial rivals, perhaps they may be aroused from their inertia. There are welcome signs of late that the question is beginning to awaken public interest. It is satisfactory to know that almost all of those whose special studies have qualified them for judgment are united in believing that there is need for prompt action if our noble tongue is to be kept fit for service in the splendid future which seems to lie open before it.

But the simplifying of English spelling in the future, like the simplifying of English syntax in the past, will not suffice to bring about the accep-

tance of our speech as the second language of every educated man. That may be accomplisht only by forces other than those affecting the language itself. In fact, it will come, if ever it shall come, solely because it had to come in the inevitable march of events.

(1907.)

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING AND "FONETIC REFORM"

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING AND "FONETIC REFORM"

EVER since the Simplified Spelling Board began its work of enlightenment by issuing its first circular, it has been confronted with a special difficulty. The Simplified Spelling Board was organized to hasten the progressive simplifying of English orthography, and not to introduce a scientifically "fonetic" spelling. The original members of the Board believed it was idle to expect that the English-speaking peoples could ever be persuaded to adopt any thorogoing scheme for making our spelling conform closely to the sound of our words. These original members hoped that the public, which had paid no attention to the extreme demands of the radical "fonetic" reformers, might be led to see the many advantages of hastening the progressive simplifying of our orthography, which has been going on slowly but unceasingly, and which has given us *economic* (instead of *œconomicke*), *jail* (instead of *gaol*) and *wagon* (instead of *waggon*). It was because they desired to accelerate the progress of this steady simplification, that they selected the name for their organization and called them-

selves the Simplified Spelling Board. And when a kindred body was establisht in Great Britain to work in alliance with the American group, it chose a similar name and called itself the Simplified Spelling Society.

And yet, in spite of the care with which this title was chosen, both the American Board and the British Society are continually accused of advocating some kind of radical "fonetic reform." A very large proportion of those who have paid no attention to the subject seem to be unable to grasp the difference between a progressive simplification of English spelling (chiefly by encouraging the existing tendency to drop out needless letters) and an absolute remaking of our orthography in accord with the demands of phonetic science. There are many casual readers of newspapers (and even not a few careless writers for newspapers) who suppose that any spelling less complicated than that to which they are accustomed, must be an instance of "fonetic reform." They are unable to see that there may be a safe middle path of progress, between the retention of all the absurd and illogical complexities of our present spelling and that ultra-logical and revolutionary upsetting of all our orthographic traditions which would be caused by the acceptance of any searching scheme of "fonetic reform." Underlying the countless quips and jibes with

which the journalistic wits sought to overwhelm the suggestions of the Simplified Spelling Board, there is to be perceived the assumption that the partizans of simplified spelling were urging again in a new guise the impossible proposals of the most impractical "fonetic reformers."

For this widespread impression there is no warrant whatever. The Simplified Spelling Board came into existence because its members were convinced that the plans of the "fonetic reformers" stood no chance of adoption and that if anything was to be done to better English orthography, there must be an entirely new departure. This difference of aim and of method the Board has set forth repeatedly; and it has again and again declared that its proposals had no immediate relation to what has been known as "fonetic reform."

Possibly one reason why there is still more or less confusion in the minds of many between the modest proposals of the Simplified Spelling Board and the sweeping demands of the "fonetic reformers" is to be found in the fact that very few English readers of average intelligence know anything about phonetics or even about the history of English spelling; and it is this absence of knowledge which leads them to confound two methods of regenerating English orthography, which are in reality very different in scope and

in effect. And perhaps there may be profit in declaring these two methods, and in setting them side by side, so as to show clearly the exact difference between them.

As a result of manifold causes, which it is not necessary to specify here, the spelling of English is in a worse condition than that of any other language. Of course, the real purpose of any method of spelling is to represent the sound of the word, if not with unswerving accuracy, at least as directly as may be possible. A language has a satisfactory orthography only when the spelling-book is wholly unnecessary and when there is a single symbol for every sound and a single sound for every symbol. This is the case in Italian and in Spanish; and in those two tongues no one reading any word need have a moment's hesitation as to its pronunciation. That this is not the case in English we all know to our sorrow.

In English some sounds are represented by many different symbols and some symbols represent many different sounds. For example, the sound of *e* in *let* represented in at least seven different ways, as in *let* itself, in *head*, in *heifer*, in *leopard*, in *says*, in *many*, and in *said*. That is to say, this simple vowel sound is in our present spelling indicated sometimes by one vowel, *e*, sometimes by another vowel, *a*, and sometimes by combinations as dissimilar as *ea*, *ei*, *eo*, *ay*,

and *ai*. As a result, when we come across the words *read* and *lead*, it is only from the context that we can find out whether they are to be pronounced so as to rime with *fed* or with *feed*. And the consonants are no better off than the vowels. For instance, the sound of *sh* in *shape* is represented in at least eight different ways,—as in *shape* itself, in *sugar*, in *suspicion*, in *conscious*, in *ocean*, in *potion*, in *tissue*, and in *anxious*. That is to say, this simple sound is indicated sometimes by one consonant *s*, sometimes by this consonant doubled, sometimes by *s* in combination with other consonants, and sometimes by combinations into which *s* does not enter. Nothing can be more illogical than the fact that in our present orthography the sound of *u* in *burn* is represented by every vowel in the language, as in *burn*, *fern*, *learn*, *fir*, *myrrh* and *journey*. But the very worst example of the chaos of our ordinary spelling is to be found in the symbol *ough*, in *cough* (pronounced *coff*), in *rough* (pronounced *ruff*), in *dough* (pronounced *doe*), in *through* (pronounced *throo*), in *borough* (pronounced *boro*), in *hough* (pronounced *hock*) and in *plough* (prounced *plow*).

These are but a few specimens, taken almost at random, to make evident the lack of logic in the orthography of English. While the orthography of French and the orthography of German

are neither of them perfect, it would be impossible to pick out of either language specimens of spelling as grotesque as those which have been here selected from our ordinary English vocabulary. And those here presented have been but a few pluckt from an almost limitless field. It is easy enough to understand how revolting such a situation must be to radical reformers governed by strict logic. There is no difficulty in perceiving why they have felt moved to act on the advice of *Hamlet* and "reform it altogether." To many a passionate believer in perfection for its own sake, the very difficulty of the task would be inspiring.

The task is soon seen to be more difficult than it seems at first. Those who have carefully studied the English language as it is now spoken, appear to be agreed that there are about forty distinct sounds in our speech. Forty sounds, and our alphabet has only twenty-six letters! In fact, when we consider it carefully we find only twenty-three useful letters, since *q* is employed only with *u*, (when it is pronounced *kw*), since *c* is pronounced either *s* or *k*, and since *x* is merely *ks*. Even if every one of the remaining twenty-three letters should be limited rigorously to a single sound—a limitation which would itself upset all our orthographic traditions—even then there would be some seventeen sounds for

which our present alphabet would provide no symbol. These seventeen sounds would demand either the invention of new letters or the adding of new accents of some sort to the existing letters, so that one sound might be represented by the letter as we now know it and another sound by the same letter with an added accent. This is the device by means of which the French and the Germans have got out of a similar difficulty.

New accents, new letters, digraphs of one kind or another, these would need to be supplied for nearly one-half of the recognized sounds of our language; and the result of all these additions would be to make a page of English look very strange indeed to most readers. But the addition of these new devices would not be as startling and as upsetting to all our orthographic habits, as the changes which would result from the rigorous limitation of every symbol to a single sound and of every sound to a single symbol. As the vowel sound of *e* in *let* is now represented in seven different ways, as in *let*, *head*, *heifer*, *leopard*, *says*, *many*, and *said*, then all the words in at least six of these classes would have to be spelt in some new fashion. As the consonant sound of *sh* in *shape* is now represented in eight different ways, as in *shape*, *sugar*, *suspicion*, *conscious*, *ocean*, *potion*, *tissue* and *anxious*, then all

the words in at least seven of these groups would necessarily appear in a novel orthography.

Now, this is precisely what the extreme "fonetic reformers" demand. They see no health except in the exact adjustment of symbol to sound and of sound to symbol, no matter how abundant and how violent the changes may be which the adoption of this scientific system of orthography would compel. It would mean the making over of English spelling, once for all, with little or no regard for existing conditions. No doubt, there is a great deal to be said in behalf of this proposition. It is logical; it would be permanent; it would put English spelling on a level with the spelling of Spanish and Italian; it would make English spelling far more exact than the present spelling of French or German; it has been approved by many scientific students of language; and it has been urged by authors as unlike as Max Müller and Mark Twain.

But altho the claims of radical "fonetic reform" have been ably presented by eloquent advocates on both sides of the Atlantic for now many years, they have never succeeded in making any impression on the general public; and there are no signs that they are likely to make any impression. The stock that speaks the English language is not enslaved by logic; it is in the habit of making haste slowly; it prefers to get its reforms piece-

meal, a little bit to-day and a little more to-morrow, as occasion serves and as the event demands; it cherishes its traditions; it follows its precedents; and it resents all suggestion of violent or radical change. It is very slow to move, and before starting it wants to see where it is going. And if these are the characteristics of the people of Great Britain and the people of the United States, what possible chance is there for any scheme of radical spelling reform?

Here, then, is the dilemma before those who want to see our noble tongue kept fit for service all over the world. Our present orthography is barbaric and wasteful; so much can hardly be denied by any one who has learnt how to read and write. And yet the adoption for every-day use of anything like real "fonetic reform," the introduction of a scientific system and the complete readjustment of our orthography, is absolutely hopeless of achievement; it stands outside the sphere of practical politics. Then what can be done? Can anything be done?

The Simplified Spelling Board and the Simplified Spelling Society were organized because their members believed that something ought to be done and that something could be done. They saw that the spelling of English had slowly bettered itself, century after century, and that illogical and barbaric as it is in the twentieth century

it was not quite so illogical and barbaric as it had been in the nineteenth century and in the eighteenth. They knew that this improvement was very largely the result of individual efforts to simplify by striking out superfluous letters and by bringing anomalous spellings into conformity with general rules. As Whitney told us, "every single item of alteration of whatever kind, and of whatever degree of importance, goes back to some individual or individuals, who set it in circulation, from whose example it gained a wider and a wider currency, until it finally won general assent, which is alone required to make anything in language proper and authoritative."

The members of the Simplified Spelling organizations believe that this process of simplification can be guided and made to operate more swiftly and more broadly. They are aware that most English monosyllables—and English is largely a monosyllabic language—have now a fairly satisfactory spelling, *cant*, for example, and *splash*, and *sum* and *thing*. They know also that a very heavy proportion of our polysyllabic words, derived mainly from Latin and from Greek, have also an orthography which was not unacceptable, *eminent*, for instance, and *submit* and *biology*, and *diabolical* and *astronomy*. They accept the fact that probably nine-tenths of our enormous vocabulary does not stand in immediate need

of much orthographic readjustment. They think that the effort to improve might now be confined to the tenth of our words which are more obviously in need of improvement. They are satisfied to ask for only a little at a time, and to take what they can get, without frightening away their possible supporters by too large a list of changes all at once.

They believed further that their effort merely to accelerate that progressive simplification—which has been evident generation after generation—would not evoke the racial antipathy to revolutionary radicalism of any kind. Indeed, they hoped that this would be acceptable, as strictly in accord with the racial regard for precedent. What the Simplified Spelling Board proposed to ask this generation to do, was precisely what the preceding generations had done, one after another. Our forefathers had dropt the *u* out of *governour;* why should not we drop the *ugh* from the end of *though?* An earlier century had cut *sunne* and *batte* down to *sun* and *bat;* why should not this century in its turn, follow the good example, and cut *programme* down to *program* and *borough* to *boro?*

In other words, the Simplified Spelling Board has been establisht merely to continue and to hasten a process which has always been at work in English orthography. It does not demand

that all which might be done shall be done at once; and it holds with Bismarck that "we had better leave something for our children to do—or they may be bored." What the Simplified Spelling Board proposes is not any radical scheme of sweeping "fonetic reform" but the encouragement of a simplification by the omission of useless letters and by the broader application of analogy—the same simplification which no man can fail to find at work more or less continuously and more or less intentionally, since the invention of printing. Any improvement is better than none; and as Roger Ascham remarked in his 'Schoolmaster' more than three centuries ago, "If we must cleave to the oldest and not the best, we should be eating acorns and wearing old Adam's pelts." The most vehement and the most vociferous opponents of the proposals of the Simplified Spellers are themselves employing numberless spellings simplified in the past; and whether they know it or not, they are themselves simplified spellers, however much they may resent the reminder.

These opponents may object as much as they please to any special simplification suggested by the American Board or by the British Society; they may abuse that as an instance of orthographic mayhem; they may hold it up to scorn as an abhorrent novelty; and in so doing they are within

their rights as individuals. But when they go beyond objurgation against any specific simplification and attack the principle of simplification itself, they then discover themselves as innovators, —in that they are now opposing a principle which has been accepted in the past and which has brought about whatever slight improvement we can discover in our spelling in the twentieth century over that of our forefathers in the eighteenth century.

These objectors reveal their own failure to understand what they are talking about when they confuse Simplified Spelling with "fonetic reform"; and as Lord Morley has remarkt in one of his recent essays, "Nothing makes men reason so badly as ignorance of the facts." Perhaps it is not too much to suggest that the most violent of these objectors are disclosing themselves as disloyal to the language they are pretending to defend, since they are antagonizing and striving to delay a modest effort to make English fitter for its impending adoption as a world-language, —that is to say, as the second tongue of all educated men thruout the habitable globe.

(1909.)

THE QUESTION OF THE THEATER

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AT the close of the memorable journey of the Comédie-Française to England in 1878, Matthew Arnold wrote a characteristic paper on the 'French Play in London,' in the course of which he took occasion to declare that "the pleasure we have had in the visit of the French company is barren, unless it leaves us with the impulse to mend the condition of our theater." He asserted that the desire for the drama is irresistible, and that, therefore, we should "organize the theater"; and he held up as model the organization of the Comédie-Française. He advised that a company of good actors be formed in London, and that to this company a theater should be given, and also a grant of money from the Science and Art Department. He proposed that the condition of this grant should be an agreement on a repertory chosen out of the works of Shakspere and of the best modern British dramatists; and he added that it would be needful to appoint a government Commissioner to see that the terms of the agreement were carried out.

It is now nearly a quarter of a century since Matthew Arnold urged these suggestions with all his playful eloquence; and as yet, neither in

Great Britain nor in the United States has anything been accomplisht toward such an organization of the theater as he had in view. But the subject has been incessantly discust. Many and fervent have been the appeals of zealous and youthful spirits, first, to that intangible entity the State, for a subsidy, and second, to that alluring personality, the benevolent multi-millionaire, for an endowment. Fervent these appeals were, no doubt, but also not a little vague; and, perhaps, this is a chief reason why they have failed to persuade. Indeed, it is not unfortunate, even for those ardently urging a reform, that the man who holds the purse-strings should never be seduced by empty declamation, that he should be hard-hearted and slow-moving, and that he should be won over at last only after careful consideration of all the facts of the case.

Now, what are the facts in this case? What are the reasons which led Matthew Arnold to call upon his countrymen to "organize the theater"? Why is it that there is in England and America an insistent demand that the theater shall be either subsidized by the State or endowed by the wealthy? What are the conditions of the theater in the English-speaking countries which call for amelioration? Apparently the theater is flourishing; never were there more playhouses than there are to-day, and never were these vari-

ous places of amusement more thickly thronged with playgoers, pleased with the entertainment proffered to them. There is no denying the sumptuousness, the propriety, and even the beauty of the scenery and costumes and decorations set before us on the stage nowadays. There is no doubt that we have many opportunities for observing acting which attains to a high level of technical accomplishment, even if actual inspiration and indisputable genius are as rare in the twentieth century as they have been in all its predecessors.

Even in the plays themselves there has been of late a distinct advance. Chatter about the decline of the drama there is now, as there always has been, and always will be. Euripides was still alive when Aristophanes declared the decadence of Attic tragedy; and Ben Jonson never hesitated to express his low opinion of those wonderful contemporaries of his, whose bold dramas have made the Elizabethan reign the noblest epoch in the history of English literature. Of course, there is no period which would not be crusht by a comparison with that illumined with the genius of Sophocles and with that irradiated by the genius of Shakspere. It is unprofitable ever to overpraise the plays of our own time; but it is unwise also to depreciate them unduly. Even if the acted drama of the English language at the beginning of the twentieth century is not equal in range, in

skill, in power, to the acted drama of the French language in the middle of the nineteenth century, it has at least freed itself from the disheartening insincerity which characterized the plays in English that had been adapted from the French.

As Matthew Arnold pointed out, the result of the effort to adjust a plot caused by French social conventions to the conditions of English life, was to produce in the attentive observer "a sense of incurable falsity." So long as the prevalent plays were adaptations of so fantastic an unreality, it was very difficult to take the theater seriously, or to expect that the dramatist should observe life faithfully or deal with it honestly. In the quarter of a century since Matthew Arnold made his plea for organizing the theater, this reproach has been taken away from the English-speaking stage. Adaptations from the French have almost disappeared; and when a foreign play is now presented in English, very rarely does it masquerade as an English play. It remains French or German; it retains its native atmosphere; it is a translation, not an adaptation. This is an immense gain; this is the first necessary step towards a revival of public interest in the drama of our own language. Our acted drama may be a poor thing, even now, but it is at least our own; it is no longer borrowed from our neighbor. Whatever criticism we may

pass upon the 'Aristocracy' of Mr. Bronson Howard, the 'Gay Lord Quex' of Mr. Pinero, the 'Liars' of Mr. H. A. Jones, the 'Alabama' of Mr. Thomas, or the 'Shore Acres' of the late Mr. Herne—and it may be that no one of these plays is an impeccable masterpiece—we must see in each of them a sincere effort to deal with life at first hand.

If the theater is thus prosperous wherever the English language is spoken, and if the dramatists are again striving to handle the stuff out of which alone literature can be made, what need is there for any modification of the situation? Why cannot the stage be let alone to take care of itself? What call is there for subsidy or endowment? The answer to these questions is to be found in the statement that the theater is now governed too much by purely commercial considerations, and that the art of the drama is the only one of the arts which is compelled to pay its own way, and which is forced to make its own living under conditions which limit its exertions to what is immediately profitable.

It is not bad for the artist that he has to earn his own bread, and that he is bound to satisfy the taste of his fellow-man; and it is not good for any art that those who practise it should be sheltered and coddled. No disadvantage has it been to us that the two greatest of modern dramatists,

Shakspere and Molière, were each of them managers with a direct interest in the takings at the door. No advantage was it to anybody that Goethe was, by the grace of the Grand Duke, made independent of the public and allowed to do what he liked on the stage of the Weimar theater, since the result of Goethe's independence of the public was that the Weimar theater brought forth little worthy to live on the German stage. The arts are democratic, all of them; but none more so than the drama, since it is inconceivable without the assistance of the people at large. If any proof were needed of the insanity of the Bavarian king, it could be found in the fact that he liked to be the sole spectator of performances in his opera-house.

Yet the experience of history seems to show that it is unwise to leave any art wholly at the mercy of the money-making motives. Even in the English-speaking countries, where more is abandoned to private enterprize than is thought advisable among the Latin races, galleries have been built for the proper exhibition of the works of living painters and sculptors; and concert-halls have been erected for the proper performance of orchestral music. In New York, for example, —and only a stone's throw from each other— stand the Carnegie Music Hall and the Vanderbilt Gallery (of the Fine Arts Building), visible

evidences of the aid willingly extended by the wealthy to the other arts. In Carnegie Hall, in the course of the season, concerts are given by three or four different symphony-orchestras, the continued existence of which is conditional upon a large subscription or on a guarantee fund substantially equivalent to a subsidy. And during the same winter months, a series of performances of grand opera, in Italian, in French, and in German, is given at the Metropolitan Opera House, —performances made possible only by a very large subscription from the box-holders, and by a reduction of the rental from the figure which the owners of the building would demand if they sought simply for a proper return on the money invested.

If men of means had not chosen to sink their money in the Metropolitan Opera House and in Carnegie Hall; if Major Higginson were now to withdraw his support from the Boston Symphony Orchestra; and if the public-spirited music-lovers of Chicago and Pittsburg were to refuse any further subsidy to the orchestras of which they are justly entitled to be proud; if music were to be deprived of all artificial assistance and forced to depend for existence solely upon the working of purely commercial motives—then music would be exactly in the same position in which the drama is now. Good music would still be heard, it is true; but we may be certain

that there would not be so many performances as there are now; and, what is more important, the performances would not be so adequate or so satisfactory, and the programs would be more in accordance with the prevailing taste of the less cultivated portion of the public. The managers of concerts would be less likely to risk upon their programs either the more austere of the classic composers or the more aggressive of the younger musicians; and they would tend to confine their selections to a small list of establisht favorites.

Much has been done for music; just as much has been done in other ways for painting, for sculpture, and for architecture. Nothing at all has been done for the drama. It is wholly dependent upon the law of supply and demand, and so long as this is the case, the manager will naturally seek to produce the kind of play likely to please the most people. He will perform it continuously, seven or eight times a week for as many weeks as possible. He will proclaim its merits as vehemently as he can; and he will advertize it very much as a circus or a sensational novel is advertized. He will be prone to turn away from any kind of play which is not so likely to please the largest portion of the public, which cannot be forced to a long run, and which cannot be boomed as a freak-fiddler is boomed. His aim will be to give the public what it wants.

In this last phrase there lurks a fallacy. There is no such entity as "the public" wanting a definite thing; or else we should not see the Irving-Terry company and the Weber-Fields company both playing to crowded houses in the same city at the same time. There are as many separate publics as there are separate attractions; these several publics intersect, and every individual probably belongs to more than one. For example, there is a very large public for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and there is a far smaller public for the symphony concerts; but of a certainty there are a goodly number of persons with a catholicity of taste which will enable them to enjoy both these entertainments. The public which delights in melodrama and in musical farce is enormous; whereas the public which would care to see a performance of the 'Oedipus' of Sophocles or the 'Ghosts' of Ibsen, is very restricted—probably it is not more than enough to fill a small theater two or three times in the course of a season. The public capable of a severe joy in the beholding of 'Oedipus' or of 'Ghosts' may be taken as one extreme; and the public which laughs hilariously at musical farce and which thrills sympathetically at melodrama may be taken as the other; and between these are publics of all sorts and of all sizes,—a limited public for 'Pelleas and Melisande,' a public less limited for the 'School for

Scandal' and for 'As You Like It,' a public fairly large for 'Hamlet,' and a public extensive beyond all belief for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' The public for broad farce is larger than that for the comedy of manners; and the public for the comedy of intrigue, relieved by sentiment, is larger than the public for tragedy.

But the fallacy in the phrase "what the public wants" really matters little. Whether there is one homogeneous public or whether there are any number of smaller and intersecting publics is of no importance, so long as the theater is controlled solely by the law of supply and demand like any other business. The manager has to present the kind of play which is calculated to please the largest number of possible spectators, and he will be likely to shrink from the kind of play which would appeal to a small public only, which cannot be forced into a long run, and which does not lend itself to circus-methods of booming. In fact, the conditions of the theater being what they are now in New York and in London, the wonder is that the level of the stage is not lower than it is actually, and that the more intelligent playgoers ever have an opportunity to see anything other than spectacle and sensation. That we have a chance now and then to behold more plays of a more delicate workmanship and of a more poetic purpose is due partly to the courage and the

liberality of certain of the managers, and partly to the honorable ambition of certain of the actors and actresses, seeking occasion for the exercise of their art in a wider range of characters.

To those managers and to these actors and actresses we owe also casual presentations of a limited number of Shaksperian plays, tragic and comic, and also of a few of the old comedies. But these performances of the classics of English dramatic literature are infrequent; and, moreover, they are not altogether satisfactory, since it is rare to find the smaller characters in the hands of trained and competent performers. In the days of the two patent theaters in London, when Drury Lane and Covent Garden had a monopoly of the serious drama, the cast of a Shaksperian comedy was extraordinarily strong; and even in New York a quarter of a century ago, the late Mr. Augustin Daly had a company so large that on one occasion it presented the 'School for Scandal' at the Fifth Avenue Theater, while the performers not needed in that play went over to Newark to perform 'London Assurance.' But the monopoly of the patent theaters in London was abolished long ago; and the large companies, such as Mr. Daly kept together for a score of years, have been broken up. Plays are now presented by companies, every performer in which was specially engaged for the specific part he has to act; and

altho this practise has advantages of its own, it does not tend to facilitate the reviving of the masterpieces of our older drama.

Thus the drama is at a grave disadvantage as compared with the other arts, owing to the absence of all outside aid. There are public libraries for the preservation of the masterpieces of literature, and there are public galleries and public museums for the proper display of the masterpieces of painting and of sculpture. There is no public theater where the masterpieces of the drama are presented for our study and for our stimulation. It is true that we can read the great plays of the great dramatists; we can read them by ourselves at our own firesides; but how pale is a perusal compared with a performance, how inadequate, how unsatisfactory! Perhaps a mere reading may enable us to appreciate some of the purely literary beauties of the play; but it will hardly help us to apprehend its essential dramatic qualities,—the very qualities which give the play its true value, and which stand revealed at once when the play is presented in the theater.

A true drama, comic or tragic, witty or poetic, is always conceived by its author in terms of the theater; he means it to be performed by players, in a playhouse, before playgoers. And every true drama loses more or less of its power when it is deprived of the theater, of the actors, and of

the audience. Recent revivals have proved that many a Greek tragedy and many a Latin comedy, remote as these may be from our modern modes of thought and disestablisht as their technic may seem to us to-day, can shake off the dust of the book-shelves and start to life again with surprizing vitality, when it is set before us on a stage by actors of flesh and blood. Whatever the impression produced upon the reader in the library by 'Macbeth' and 'As You Like It,' by the 'Alchemist' and 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts,' by the 'School for Scandal' and 'She Stoops to Conquer,' it is not so deep, not so varied, not so lasting as that produced upon the spectator in the theater. The frequent and liberal revival of the masterpieces of dramatic literature, English and foreign, ancient and modern, would be very expensive. In a pecuniary sense it would not pay, —any more than the exhibition of Rembrandt's 'Gilder' would pay as a private enterprize.

So long as the theater is governed chiefly by commercial considerations, we have no right to expect managers to take a great risk for a very doubtful reward. Most of the managers will go on appealing to the largest public with melodrama and with musical farce; they will strive to make money out of sensation and spectacle; and in so doing they will be wholly without blame. From a minority of the managers, men of a wiser liber-

ality and a finer taste, and from actors of a lofty aspiration, we shall get now and again a modern play of a subtler significance and an old play of a more poetic beauty; and for these guerdons we ought honestly to be grateful. So long as the theater is left to the operation of the law of supply and demand, it is idle to look for a manager who will make it his business to produce plays which he knows cannot be forced into a long run, and who will take pleasure in presenting the masterpieces of dramatic literature as they ought to be presented. Without a subsidy or an endowment or financial support of some kind, he could hardly hope to pay his expenses.

A subsidy from the State was what Matthew Arnold proposed, and he suggested the establishment of a British Theater on the model of the Théâtre Français. Most of the Parisian theaters are private enterprizes, but four of them are more or less supported by the national government, two for music, the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, and two for the drama, the Théâtre Français and the Odéon,—the official title of the latter being the Second Théâtre Français. The Théâtre Français is a sumptuous playhouse owned by the State and assigned rent-free, with a large annual subsidy also, to the Comédie-Française, a commonwealth of the chief actors and actresses, who govern themselves more or less under the

control of a director appointed by the government. The associates elect their successors; they engage the subordinate performers on salary; and they divide among themselves the annual profits of their enterprize. They are expected to remain members as long as they are fit for service; and then they can take a farewell benefit and retire on a pension. They have various committees of their own; but they generally leave abundant power to the director, who is the executive, and who is also a sharer in the profits.

Altho it has had its ups and downs, the Théâtre Français is the foremost theater of the world; and its company is incomparably large and gifted, most of the actors and actresses having been trained at the Conservatory, and having been chosen because of their skill in interpreting the tragedies of Corneille and Racine and the comedies of Molière and Beaumarchais. It gives seven or eight performances a week, and the newest play is never repeated more than four times in that period, and rarely more than three. One or two performances a week are always devoted to the classical drama, comic or tragic; and any one spending a single winter in Paris may have occasion to see half of the acknowledged masterpieces of the French stage. Upon the remaining nights are presented modern pieces chosen from a vast and varied repertory. Comparatively

few of the best plays of the last half-century were originally produced at the Théâtre Français; but this theater took them over after they had proved their value on other stages. Altho the Théâtre Français is continually experimenting with new pieces, in prose and in verse, by the foremost living French dramatists, its chief function is rather to be a museum of the French drama, ancient and modern; and its main reliance is more upon its repertory than upon its novelties.

The Comédie-Française is an institution which we may easily envy, but which we should find it very difficult to imitate. It is what it is, because it is a growth of more than two centuries. It is one of the only two institutions of the Monarchy which survived the Revolution with undiminisht prestige; the other is the French Academy. It was not a creation of the king's, even when it was founded; it was only the consolidation, under royal control, of three companies of actors already existing as private enterprizes. Even now, it is not so much governed by its statutes as it is ruled by its traditions; and we cannot hope to extemporize traditions. If it did not now exist, we may doubt whether it would be possible to establish it to-day, even in France, where everybody is trained to expect governmental supervision and support for all the arts. Still more may

we doubt whether the result would not have been sadly disappointing if the British had taken Matthew Arnold's advice a score of years ago and had formed a company of actors, assigning to this body a theater in London, a grant from the Science and Art Department, and a government Commissioner. As Bismarck said, "you cannot ripen fruit by setting lamps under the tree." No worthy rival of the Comédie-Française could be treated off-hand by mere fiat.

But Matthew Arnold must have known how very unlikely it was that any attention would be paid to his advice. Indeed, we who speak English need not waste our time in asking for aid for the theater from the government. We shall not get it, no matter how insistent our demand. And if we in America are wise enough to consider the situation carefully, we shall not seek government aid; because, if we were to get it, the last state of the drama might be worse than the first. In the one art in which the government has had to take an interest, and upon which it may even have exerted some influence, the result has only too often been sadly unsatisfactory, as all will admit who recall the pitifully pretentious United States Building set amid the beautiful palaces of the Chicago Exhibition. Altho, as a people, we Americans seem to have a remarkable aptitude for art, we are as yet untrained to appreciate it;

and we are as yet unwilling to pay proper respect to expert opinion.

The civil service of the nation and of many of the state governments is now highly efficient; but the civil service of most of our cities is in a less satisfactory condition; and it is from the city, rather than from the state or the nation, that a state-aided theater would expect its support. It is true that, even in the cities, the outlook is encouraging and the foul atmosphere of the spoils-system is lifting; but it has not now been lifted entirely; and no lover of the drama would face with composure the prospect of a municipal theater in New York, where Tammany could turn it over to the control of some ignorant spoilsman. But no more words need be wasted in considering the advantages and disadvantages of a theater supported by the government, as the Théâtre Français is in France. Such a discussion is academic only, since in the present state of opinion among the peoples that speak English, the debate can hardly have any practical result.

It is not by seeking government aid that the problem of the theater can be solved in the United States or in Great Britain. Those who wish to do something for the drama must rely on themselves, taking pattern by those who have been able to accomplish wonders for the elevation of music. When this decision is once reacht the question

is easier of answer. What is it we really want, after all? We want to find a retort to the manager who tells us that he cannot afford to attempt certain more delicate forms of dramatic art, or to present the masterpieces of the drama as they ought to be presented. We want to help this manager to accomplish that which the existing purely commerical conditions of the theater prevent him from attempting. What has to be done is to come to the aid of the drama, just as the owners of the Metropolitan Opera House came to the aid of the opera. The opera in New York is still a private enterprize, but it would be difficult to present the music-drama, with all the parts taken by singers of wide renown, if the manager was not sustained by the heavy subscriptions, and especially by a release of the full rental which the owners of the edifice would expect if they had been governed solely by the desire to get the largest possible return for the money invested.

The same problem presented itself in Vienna and in Berlin, in spite of the fact that there were state-aided theaters in both cities; and the solution discovered by the Germans is at the service of the Americans and the British. It is very simple, but it is perfectly satisfactory. A body of subscribers raises a sum of money sufficient to pay the rent of a theater, and they then turn the the-

ater over rent-free to a manager who will pledge himself to conduct it along certain lines, and to accord certain privileges to the subscribers. The manager will try to make the theater pay him a profit, and he will try to attract the public; but it will be rather the smaller public that likes the better class of play than the larger public that is more easily pleased by sensation and by spectacle. With a subsidy equivalent to his rental, the manager would bind himself to give up the habit of unbroken runs,—the practice of acting the same play six and seven and eight times a week. He would be able to return to the earlier custom of the English-speaking theater,—that of a nightly change of bill, such as we still expect at the opera, and such as we find at the Théâtre Français in Paris, at the Lessing Theater in Berlin, and at the Volks-theater in Vienna.

Under these conditions a play might still have a very long run, but its run would not be compacted within a brief period. Every new piece and every important revival would at first appear on the bills for three of the seven performances or even for four; and then as its attractive power waned, it would drop down to two performances a week, perhaps, and finally to one a fortnight. Thus two or even three different plays might be running at the same time, as is the case now at the Théâtre Français, where the 'Monde où l'on

s'ennuie' attained its five-hundredth performance about ten years after it was first produced, and where it can still be seen every winter. Thus it would be possible to bring out plays of delicate texture or of historical interest, certain to attract for a dozen or a score of performances, but not likely to draw full houses for a month at a time.

If the manager was wisely chosen and if the contract with him was for a term of years, three at least, or five, with the understanding that it would be renewed certainly if his management had approved itself to the subscribers,—then much should be left to his discretion. The contract would debar him from performing the more violent melodrama or the lighter forms of farce; and might require him to revive every season two or three Shaksperian plays, either comic or tragic, and two or three of the older comedies of our language. He would not be required, or even expected, to mount these plays as elaborately or as expensively as is the custom when the appeal to the love of spectacle is an approved method of pleasing the unthinking crowd. And these standard plays, once produced with scenery and costumes and properties, sufficient but not extravagant, would be kept in stock ready for performance at any time during the season at a week's notice. At first, of course, the repertory would not be large, but it would become more varied and richer year by

year. The manager would be ever on the lookout for the best modern plays, American and British, French and German. He would be able also to select from the large stock of pieces written in our language during the past twenty years which are unfamiliar to the latest generation of playgoers. His aim would be to get together a repertory of plays, old and new, which would make him somewhat independent in case the actual novelties he produced should not prove attractive. A solid repertory is invaluable to a manager; it is to him what a reserve-fund is to a banker.

To do justice to so varied a repertory, a large and competent company of actors and actresses would be required,—not stars, of course, but ambitious and accomplisht performers. There would be no need to pay extravagant salaries, as an engagement in such a theater would soon be esteemed an honor. Furthermore, the actors would be spared the wear and tear of a succession of "one-night stands"; and they would also enjoy the luxury of a home. The frequent change of bill would tend to decrease the unwillingness of young actors and actresses to appear in parts they might deem unworthy of them, an unwillingness which has some justification under the existing conditions, when a character may have to be sustained for a hundred times in succession.

But when the bill changes every night, a performer sure of a good part on Monday and on Wednesday is less strenuous in his objection to performing a part not so good on Tuesday. The accumulation of a repertory would thus tend to strengthen the casts of the more important plays; and there might even be developt in time a disinterestedness like that displayed in the famous Meiningen company, where the foremost actors were accustomed to appear in the smallest parts.

If such a theater were to be establisht in New York, its season should be at least eight months long. Perhaps the manager might be allowed the privilege of taking the company to other cities during the summer months; but the wisdom of this may be doubted; and perhaps a part of the rental might be earned by leasing the playhouse itself during the summer months to some other manager for the performance of lighter summer plays. But, if possible, it would be best to keep the theater closed except when its own company was playing in it, and not to let the company play anywhere else. If possible, also, it would be desirable to build a special theater as soon as the success of the scheme was assured,—a special theater more spacious and more comfortable both before and behind the curtain than any now existing in New York.

The house should not be too large for the subtler passages of comedy; but its lobbies and its aisles and its seats should all be upon a generous scale. If the theater could succeed in accustoming a certain body of constant playgoers to feel at home within its walls, special nights might be set apart for the subscribers, like the Tuesdays of the Théâtre Français, to attend which is a point of honor in the fashionable world of Paris.

Those who undertake to carry out any such scheme as is here suggested will have to face one serious difficulty, and they will have to avoid one grave danger. The difficulty will be that of finding a fit manager, who must be a man of taste, of tact, of experience, of executive ability, and of sufficient means to support the enterprize. The danger will be that of yielding to the assaults of the cranks and of the freaks, who will denounce any effort to come to the aid of the drama which does not promise to satisfy their demands. To appeal successfully to the intelligent public, the promoters of a scheme like this must avoid all pretentious affectation of "elevating the theater" and of encouraging only the poetic drama. They must refrain from all promises to bring out the more or less dramatic poems of Browning and of Maeterlinck, or to push forward the darker pictures of life shown in the dramas of Ibsen and Hauptmann. They must not expect to discover

new dramatists; and they need count on no aid from the mere men of letters, who, as such, have no more knowledge of the theater than the painters have. In other words, the promoters of this scheme ought to be practical men, taking a common-sense view and trying to improve the conditions of the actual theater. They should look upward, but they should not aim too high at first.

These suggestions may seem very commonplace; and it may be confest at once that they are not epoch-making. They do not point toward any theatrical Utopia, nor do they promise any dramatic millennium. They propose to make an easy beginning, in the belief that the best way to get the attention and the assistance of the public-spirited is to show that an improvement is actually possible. When interest is aroused by the realization of a modest program such as is here set forth, then it will be time to be more ambitious. If the theater here outlined were successfully establisht in New York and if it had proved its utility, the first step would have been taken along the right path,—at the end of which there might loom an American rival of the Théâtre Français. This is a prediction which one need not be afraid to make, in spite of George Eliot's remark that, "among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous."

(1902.)

PERSUASION AND CONTROVERSY

PERSUASION AND CONTROVERSY

A FEW years ago a colonel of the Civil War, who is now a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, delivered a Memorial Day address on the 'Soldier's Faith,' in which he suggested that it is perhaps "not vain for us to tell the new generation what we learnt in our day and what we still believe—that the joy of life is living, is to put out all one's powers as far as they will go, and the measure of power is obstacles overcome; to ride boldly at what is in front of you, be it fence or enemy; to pray not for comfort but for combat; to keep the soldier's faith against the doubts of civil life, more besetting and harder to overcome than all the misgivings of the battlefield."

It will be a sorry day for us when words like these of Mr. Justice Holmes fail to arouse an echo in the hearts of our young men.

> For never land long lease of empire won
> Whose sons sat silent when base deeds were done.

When the youth of America is ready to seek comfort and to shrink from combat, then the end will be near, and society will stagnate into a morass of moral malaria. Life is neither nirvana nor

chaos; it is a never-ending struggle toward the Promised Land; and no sooner have we topt one hill than another still higher rises before us, which we shall find the easier to climb since our muscles have been hardened by the earlier effort. No sooner is one victory won than there looms large before us the next conquest to be undertaken. There is never a truce in the fighting, and never a season when the armor may be laid aside. But of a truth the joy of living is in the putting forth of all our power in overcoming the obstacles which are more abundant and more difficult in civil life than on the battlefield, as the soldier-judge declared. Yet the more abundant they may be and the more difficult, the keener is the zest of combat, and the less worthy is the comfort which might come to us from giving up the struggle.

If, however, there is a cause in behalf of which it is worth while to battle, surely also it will be worth while to learn how to wage the war. Ardent youth is swift to enter on a civic campaign, often without training and without taking time to form a plan, altho even the youngest of us knows that the military instruction at West Point extends over four years and that it teaches only the elements of the art of war. If it is true that the conflicts of civil life are more exhausting than those in which the soldier engages, and that the

manuvers of the enemy are more baffling, then is there an obvious need of education for those who are undertaking a civic struggle. They go forth to contend with evil, by calling the attention of the public to the impending danger and by awakening the interest of good citizens in the cause in which they are enlisted.

Here it is that a military metaphor becomes misleading. Altho it is our duty to wrestle with wrong and to overcome it, we can win the fight only with the weapons of peace; and of these the most important is persuasion. We can achieve our end only by so presenting our case as to bring over to our opinion the majority of our fellow-citizens. Undue aggressiveness is wholly out of place; it will never attract, it will always repel. No doubt the actual adversary must be faced boldly; but there is rarely any real chance of converting him, for he is rooted in his own superstition, and he has his own reasons for the faith that is in him. It is not the opponent who stands up against us that we are striving to convince, since his case is hopeless. It is to the bystanders that every appeal must be addrest, to those who are looking on idly and without attention. If their interest can be aroused, if they can be converted to our view, then our adversary is beaten, even if he is stubborn to the end; for then the majority is ours, and he is only one of a shrinking

minority. This is an aspect often overlookt by men who are naturally combative and who are lacking in the sympathetic appeal which wins adherents; they spend all their energy in the grapple with the individual advocate of the other side, paying little heed to the duty of persuading those who are not hostile, but only indifferent. Sometimes it seems as tho their interest was rather in the argumentative duel than in the final decision of the debate.

Only those who have taken active part in urging an improvement or in assaulting an evil ever realize how difficult it is to awaken the attention of the general public in behalf of any particular cause, and how protracted and wearisome a task it is to arouse any real interest in favor of it. The human units who make up the general public know little or nothing about any one topic, and they seem to care less. They have each of them their own traditions, their own prejudices, their own proportion of conservatism, their own distrust of innovation. They have a strong desire to let well enough alone and to keep to the good old ways. Yet they are not resolutely hostile to any new proposal; they simply fail to see the necessity for it or to seize the significance of it. They are open to conviction, if you can once get them to listen to you while you show cause why your opinion should be adopted. They are all of

them engaged in minding their own business; and they are loth to lend an ear to any one who asks them to listen to argument or even to evidence.

Yet it is these human units who are to be made to listen, who are to be won over, who are to be awakened from careless inattention and aroused to active interest. Whoever applies himself to this labor of love must possess his soul in patience and curb his temper with firmness. He must put up a good fight against the defenders of the condition which he is attacking, but he ought not to waste his strength mainly upon them. He must never let a delight in controversy tempt him to forget that his chief duty is not to argue with the other side, but to persuade the men who are taking no part in the dispute—the men who are ready enough to dismiss the matter from their minds, and who are prompt to cry "a plague o' both your houses." These are the very men whose support, if only it can once be secured, will make success certain. Whenever they can be allured into listening to the facts, they are swift enough in coming to a decision on the merits of the case; and when public opinion has once been created in favor of a cause, all the protests of its opponents are useless and hopeless. There is no need to waste time in answering the arguments of the other side after the public has made up its mind.

It is not really argument which is effective; it is information. If once you can induce the public to believe that here is something that they ought to know about, if once you can get them to turn aside from their own work long enough to take in a plain statement of fact, then the rest is easy. But to get them to listen at all is not easy; it is very hard indeed, and it cannot be done in a hurry. It can be done only by patient and unceasing effort, which profits by every occasion, and which neglects no opportunity.

In this first approach nothing is more important than an unassuming manner. If you want to win the public to listen, you must be firm, of course, but you must not be condescending; for there is nothing that human nature resents more quickly than being addrest in words of one syllable, as tho it was infantile in understanding. And as you must not assume superiority, so you must avoid the domineering tone and the aggressive attitude which only too many reformers are prone to adopt. For example, there is little doubt that the ineffectiveness of Ruskin's eloquent crying aloud in the wilderness was due largely to his shrill scolding and to his contemptuous bullying. As the late Sir Leslie Stephen pointed out, "the arrogance of Ruskin's language . . . is one of the awkward consequences of being an inspired prophet," since "it is implied in your

very position that your opponents are without an essential mental faculty." Over-emphasis always excites antagonism in the average man, just as over-statement arouses suspicion.

In fact, nothing is more effective than an under-statement so clear and so moderate that the listener is inclined to believe himself capable of restating your case more powerfully; for if he once undertakes this, he is your partizan forever, if only for the pleasure of arguing on your side better than you have done. As M. Emile Faguet has reminded us recently, "the great point of all dialectic and of all eloquence is to make men believe that they come to a decision of their own accord, that they are guiding themselves, that the idea which has just been given to them is one they have had since infancy." This is a difficult feat, no doubt, but it can be accomplisht by a sincere speaker who is also adroit, as Lincoln was. It is never achieved by an exhorter who scolds and who bullies; the more he talks himself hoarse, the more he hardens the hearts of his hearers, fixt in their resolve to oppose him.

It is recorded that Benjamin R. Curtis once tried a law case against John P. Hale, and was astounded when the verdict went against him. "I had with me all the evidence and all the argument," he explained, "but that confounded fellow Hale got so intimate with the jury that I

could do nothing with them." And we may rest assured that there was in Hale's manner, while he was dealing with the men in the jury-box, nothing superior or condescending, nothing aggressive or domineering. He met them on the level of a common humanity, and he assumed that they possest both intelligence and a desire to do right. It is comic to think how complete a failure Carlyle or Ruskin would have made had either of them been called to the bar. Prophets of wrath they may have been, both of them, but sweet reasonableness was not their portion. They may have helped to destroy the temples of Baal, but whatever they sought to build themselves was built on the shifting sand. At best, they achieved only the easier feat of destruction, and they failed to accomplish the more useful duty of construction.

An illustration of the successful use of cogent under-statement can be taken from the history of the movement in behalf of international copyright. Only after half a dozen years of incessant endeavor was it possible to pass the act of 1891, whereby the protection of copyright in the United States was extended to foreign authors provided they complied with certain conditions. Previously these authors had no control here over their own writings, which were freely pirated, thus forcing American authors to sell their writings in unfair

competition with stolen goods. Obviously, this was a bitter wrong alike to the friendly alien and to the citizen; but it was very difficult to make the average man see this. Winter after winter the members of the American Copyright League devoted themselves to the awakening of public interest. Meetings were held in the larger cities, and reports were publisht in the local newspapers and telegrapht all over the country; speeches were made before all sorts of societies; sermons were preached on the "national sin of literary piracy"; articles were inserted in the magazines and reviews; statements were put forth frequently in which the question was considered from every point of view; explanatory pamphlets were to be had for the asking; and no possible means of arresting public attention was neglected. And yet, after this propaganda had been going on for years, the advocates of justice were continually surprized to meet men of education and of intelligence who had paid no attention to our appeals and who were not aware that there was a wrong to be righted. These men were very rarely hostile; they were only uninterested because of their total ignorance in the matter. Generally we found it easy enough to gain their sympathy, and sometimes even their active support, after they once understood the need for an improvement in the law. But they had been

minding their own business, and they had not been reacht by any of the multitudinous appeals that we had been making.

Some of the appeals, it must be confest, were now and then declamatory and domineering; and it was apparently a reading of these unduly vehement documents which turned the late Speaker Reed against the cause. This was the more unfortunate as the time came when he was the one man whose good-will was absolutely necessary. The friends of the bill believed that it would pass if it was allowed to come up; that is to say, if only the Speaker would grant a small portion of time in the final days of the session, always tumultuously overcrowded. Just then, as it happened, a member of the League publisht a paper from a new point of view, tracing the slow evolution of copyright ever since the invention of printing, and pointing out that the United States, which had been among the most progressive nations at the end of the eighteenth century, was among the most backward in this respect at the end of the nineteenth. The writer of this paper was studiously moderate in tone, and he strove to force the reader to draw his own conclusion—that the opportunity was then offered for this country to recover its proper rank among the nations. A member of the Copyright League —who was afterward the President of the United

States—askt the Speaker to read this article as a personal favor to him; and the next day Mr. Reed told Mr. Roosevelt that he was ready to grant time for the passage of the bill.

Probably it was the cautious under-statement of this paper which captured the sympathy of the Speaker, and quite possibly the vehemence of some of the other appeals which had repelled him were more effective with readers of another type. The very manner needful to arouse the interest of one man another man may reject as rant. There are all sorts and conditions of men, and they cannot all be converted by the same arguments. But, however emotional the speaker, however lofty his standard, however assured he may be as to the moral necessity of the step he is advocating, he will fail to reach the hearts and to touch the minds of his hearers unless he is ever honest with himself and unless he is absolutely fair to his opponents. If he descends to personalities, he may amuse his audience, but he is far less likely to bring them over to his side. Indeed, the sincere advocate of a cause will often accomplish most by resolutely refusing to acknowledge the existence of his opponents as persons. In stating his own case he will meet their arguments fairly, refuting them as best he can; but it will be arguments that he will attack, and never the persons who have put forth the arguments.

Especially will he refrain from misjudging the good faith of those who urge these opposing arguments; for, by the very fact that he has been willing to enter on a debate with them, he has placed himself on the same plane, and whatsoever debases them lowers him also. Any man seeking to persuade will do well to refrain from controversy. It was Dr. Holmes who drew attention to what he wittily called "the hydrostatic paradox of controversy," pointing out that "controversy equalizes fools and wise men, and the fools know it."

The wise men know it also; and they keep out. They know that controversy, in the narrow meaning of the word, is useless, and worse than useless, even if it does not descend into the rude exchange of offensive personalities. They know, as Sainte-Beuve has declared, that "after half an hour of any dispute no one of the contestants is any longer in the right, and no one of them is then really aware of what he is saying." They know that public interest very soon ebbs away from a dispute between persons, and that public opinion is likely to accept what each side says against the other and to reject what each side says in favor of itself. They know that a prolonged debate is likely to defeat the desires of those who are in the right and to raise a dust of side-issues for the profit of those who are in the

wrong. They know that nothing is more hopelessly uninteresting than a controversy which has died down to its ashes. They know that protracted controversy is fatal to persuasion, and that persuasion is the only means of carrying a cause to victory.

Not a few wise men have carried this distaste for dispute so far that they have resolutely refused to pay any attention to personal attacks. Buffon was one of these; and he explained that he took pride in the thought that persons of a certain kind could not injure him. Ibsen advised Georg Brandes to adopt the same attitude—"Look straight ahead; never reply with a word in the papers; if in your writings you become polemical, then do not direct your polemic against this or that particular attack; never show that a word of your enemies has had any effect on you." Jowett summed up his own principles in a terse sentence: "Never retract, never explain; get it done, and let them howl." And this is only a new setting of the old Scots saying, "They say. What say they? Let them say." Silent contempt is often the most crushing rejoinder; it is the true vengeance of large souls; and it is the one way open to all who are seeking to persuade and who are determined to abstain from bickering. A good workman is not known by the chips on his shoulder.

In attacking a venerable abuse, the ardent advocate of improvement will find himself confronted by opponents belonging to several different classes. First of all, there are those who are conservative by nature and who are moved to defend the establisht order of things simply because it is the establisht order, and because they dread and detest innovation of any kind; and these can often be won over by showing that the proposed change is not really an innovation, but rather a return to the practise of the fathers and to the usage of the good old days. Second, there are those whose good faith is beyond question, but whose temperament leads them to defend the existing situation in spite of its defects; and these are the men whose opposition is most difficult to overcome, because they are honorable adversaries, possest of the best intentions. They must ever be faced firmly but courteously; and their arguments must be met squarely. It was of opponents of this type that Gladstone was thinking when he said that "the one lesson life has taught me is that where there is known to be a common object, the pursuit of truth, there should be a studious desire to interpret the adversary in the best sense his words will fairly bear."

There is a third class containing those who are personally profiting by the abuse which you are attacking; and it is from these that you may

expect the bitterest fight and the most unscrupulous. They will never hesitate to resort to the meanest of personalities and to the imputing of the lowest of motives. They will seize any weapon that comes handy; and they will never hesitate to strike below the belt. This is an unsavory opposition, which must be anticipated; as the 'Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table' declared, with his pithy shrewdness, "you never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it." But altho the defense of an abuse by the men of this type, who are toucht in their pocket, will always be venomous and protracted, it is likely also to be so violent and so hysteric and so offensive as to repel the sympathy of the disinterested onlookers in whose hands the final decision lies.

As a general rule, it is safest and wisest to disregard the ululations of unworthy adversaries of this type or of any other; but sometimes a rare occasion may arise when it is needful to turn on an opponent, and to smite him hip and thigh, and to reduce him at once to impotent silence; and this is what Huxley did to the Bishop of Oxford. Sometimes again the chance may present itself to puncture an adversary with a swift retort, just as Leatherstocking caught by the handle the tomahawk the Indian had thrown at him, hurling

it back at once to bury itself in the brain of his red foeman. Once when a noted wit was holding forth, a drunken bystander broke out with "You're a liar!" To which the noted wit returned, instantly and with the utmost suavity of manner, "Surely not—if *you* say so!" When Beecher was addressing a meeting in Liverpool packt with Southern sympathizers, a voice from the gallery askt him why we had not ended the war in sixty days as we had said we would. At this home-thrust, there was a pause in the tumult, and Beecher took advantage of it to reply, "We should have done so, if we had been fighting Englishmen!" To the credit of his hearers, this bold stroke toucht their sense of fair play, and thereafter they listened to what he had to say.

But tho this may be successful, it is ever dangerous, for it is perilously close to the flinging to and fro of empty personalities. If the foeman is unworthy of your steel, and if you suspect him capable of a foul blow, it is best to refuse to cross swords with him. There was common sense in the saying of Truthful James, in his metrical minutes of the meeting of the 'Society upon the Stanislaw,' when he declared that

> I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent
> To say another is an ass—at least, to all intent;
> Nor should the individual who happens to be meant
> Reply by heaving rocks at him, to any great extent.

The general public takes no interest in the bandying about of personalities; and it is even inclined to despise a victory won in such ignoble strife. On the other hand, it is swift to give its confidence to those whom it has observed to be honest to themselves and fair to their adversaries, moderate in statement and dignified in utterance. And it is the general public which must decide the question at last; and the general public is ever repelled by unseemly altercation. It can be reacht only by incessant and unassuming persuasiveness. He who seeks to convert it must be patient and persistent, coaxing the general public to go forward with him one step at a time, and taking care that there are no steps backward. He must remember the potency of little drops of water and of little grains of sand. He must not try for too much all at once; but he must ever be ready to take what he can get, and he must always be glad to convert an individual here and there, since the general public is only a mass of stray individuals.

Above all else must the advocate of a new cause and the assailant of an old abuse respect the opinions of those he is striving to convert. He must always bear in mind that the average man, the unit which is multiplied into the general public, means to do right—that the average man is ever ready honestly to echo the fine phrase of Marcus

Aurelius: "If any one is able to convince me and show that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change. For I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured. But he is injured who abides in his error and ignorance."

(1905.)

REFORM AND REFORMERS

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WHEN a notorious Tammany official went on the stump and cried "To Hell with Reform," many simple folk were shockt, and many less simple pretended to be shockt. But the blatant spoilsman was only voicing violently a sentiment which must often have been felt, more or less clearly, by many an honest man who happened to be endowed with a full share of the invaluable quality for which we have no better name than sense-of-humor. It was this sentiment which moved Curtis (recalling the Brook Farmers) to assert that "no wise man is long a Reformer, for wisdom sees plainly that growth is steady, sure, and neither condemns nor rejects what is or has been," whereas "Reform is organized distrust." It was this sentiment which moved Lowell (having Garrison in mind) to declare that "there never has been a leader of Reform who was not also a blackguard."

In the 'Blithedale Romance,' Hawthorne, drawing on his experiences with the same group of enthusiasts that Curtis had associated with, warns us that "no sagacious man will long retain his sagacity if he live exclusively among Reform-

ers and progressive people, without periodically returning into the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint." The biographer of Parkman tells us how that clear-eyed and high-minded historian was ever ready to "ride hard against idealists and Reformers," holding that transcendentalism was weakening to common sense and dangerous to practical aims. "The ideal Reformer," said Parkman, "is generally a nuisance when he tries to deal with the broad and many-sided questions involved in the government of nations." Colonel Higginson, after a wide experience of women and men, has assured us that "Reformers are like Eskimo dogs, which must be hitcht to the sledge each by a separate thong; if put in a common harness, they turn and eat each other up." And Emerson, after declaring that he liked best "the strong and worthy persons who support the social order without hesitation or misgiving," asserted that "the profest philanthropists, it is strange and horrible to say, are an altogether odious set of people whom one would shun as the worst of bores and canters."

Here is a striking unanimity of opinion, and if we are justified in suspecting a sinister motive in the frank desire of the Tammany office-seeker to send below the thing he had reason to hate, we can impute no mean motive to Lowell, to

Curtis and to Higginson, who proved themselves active in good works. And if Hawthorne and Parkman and Emerson were never actual leaders in any specific improvement of public affairs, we know them as men of lofty character and of transparent sincerity. Why is it that these men, the very stuff out of which heroic chiefs are made, seem to be united in disliking and in distrusting not only the noble army of Reformers but also the sacred cause of Reform itself? They, at least, had no personal reason to think ill of it; they had no occasion to fear it; they were ever ready to do what might lie in their power to help along the millennium; and, if they held these hostile or contemptuous opinions, we may rest assured they had good and sufficient reasons.

It is not, of course, that they were not friends of progress and that they would not subscribe to Professor William James's declaration that "for morality, life is a war, and the service of the highest is a sort of cosmic patriotism, which also calls for volunteers." It is not that they would hesitate to approve of Whittier's advice to a youth of fifteen: "My lad, if thou wouldst win success, join thyself to some unpopular but noble cause." It is not that they were prepared to accept as their own the bitter remark attributed to the late Roscoe Conkling, "When Dr. Johnson said that Patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel, he

did not foresee the infinite possibilities of the word Reform." But altho Lowell and Curtis and Higginson might not be prepared to echo the sharp saying of that cynical politician, none of them would fail to understand what he meant and to appreciate the reasons which moved him to say it.

In any attempt to explain this attitude of theirs the first suggestion which forces itself on us is, that the Reformer is very likely to be lacking in the sense-of-humor, without which a man is more or less incapacitated from getting along comfortably with his fellows. By the very fact that he has set his heart upon the accomplishment of a single improvement, he has reduced his sense of proportion. He is likely to resemble the character in Ibsen's 'Wild Duck,' who is described as "suffering from chronic integrity in an acute form"; and he may possibly have a certain likeness to the character in Turgenef's 'Dimitri Roudine,' who took himself so seriously that "he lookt like his own statue erected by a national subscription." He feels himself exalted by the elevation of his own aim in life; and it is hard for him not to become convinced that he is right and always right, whereas the rest of the inhabitants of the globe are wrong and always wrong. Slowly but surely, as the years roll by, he comes to the conclusion that he alone possesses the secret of

wisdom, and that he alone holds the universe by the tail.

When Charles Sumner was elected senator, Theodore Parker wrote him, "I hope you will build on the Rock of Ages, and look to Eternity for your justification." Now, when a man is looking to Eternity and building on the Rock of Ages he may very easily accept himself as a prophet and believe that his denunciation of evil is the result of direct inspiration. In time, as he finds his burning words wasted on stubborn ears, he may be moved to the increasing virulence of invective which is prone to call forth, tho never to justify, the retaliatory brutality of personal assault. Reform is tarnisht, as Religion is stained, when those who declare themselves its followers discover themselves to be lacking in the ordinary decencies of civilization. There is no denying that there are to-day among the so-called anti-Imperialists and among those who are now urging Total Abstinence, as there were half a century ago among the Anti-slavery leaders, not a few, in good standing among their conscientious associates, who have proved themselves reckless in misrepresentation and malignant in imputing evil motives to their opponents. Apparently, some of those who plant themselves on a lofty pinnacle far above the common herd of mankind, to proclaim a higher rule of life than

that which the rest of the world seems willing to accept, feel themselves thereby freed from the obligations prescribed for us all by every-day courtesy, and sometimes even from those imposed by common honesty.

Something of the same unscrupulousness, due to intensity of conviction, has been discovered also in certain religious enthusiasts; and George Eliot,—so Mr. G. J. Holyoake has recently recorded,—held it as a solemn conviction, the result of a lifetime of observation, that, in proportion as the thoughts of men and women are removed from the earth in which they live to an invisible world, they are led to neglect their duty to each other. Whether this opinion of the emancipated novelist is well founded or not, there is justification for the belief that those who focus their thoughts on a single object, in which the rest of us take a less lively interest, and which is to be achieved only by protracted agitation, are very likely to be led after a while to see this single object out of all proportion, overshadowing everything else in the world. In time, opposition enrages them; and they begin to feel that it can be due only to the malign influence of a personal devil. They are firmly assured that he who is not with them is against them; and they are no longer in doubt that he who is against them is an enemy of mankind. Thus it was that Garrison, never a lovely

character, was moved to declare that if the Constitution of the United States protected slavery, it was "a league with Death and a covenant with Hell." In violence, as in vocabulary, this is really not so very unlike the Tammany outcry, "To Hell with Reform."

Even when the sincere Reformer of this type, the disinterested and public-spirited citizen, is able to refrain from vulgar outbreaks of temper, he may yet yield to the temptation of despising the heads and the hearts of all those who fail to be moved by his appeals and who refuse to look at the world from his special standpoint. It is difficult indeed for him not to feel self-satisfaction in his own superior sagacity and in his own more sensitive integrity; and this self-satisfaction is perilously close to conceit. By the very fact that he sees a need for action which others fail to see, he can hardly help thinking himself more far-sighted than the average. By the very act of taking trouble for the general good, when his fellows stand by inert, he is forced to find himself more public-spirited than other citizens. He is sorely tempted to regard his own cotery of come-outers as the sole reservoirs of virtue and of wisdom.

This leads him to resent bitterly all adverse criticism of his acts; and it brings him sometimes to the verge of unscrupulousness. Conscious of

his own rectitude, convinced of his own disinterestedness, assured of his own sagacity, devoted to the duty of hastening the delayed triumph of his cause, he is sometimes brought to accept the indefensible theory that the end justifies the means. He is sometimes only too willing to "fight the devil with fire." Now, a good man who was also a wise man would know that no maxim is falser than that which suggests this method of battling with Satan. Fire is the devil's own element, and he has has never any fear of the flames. What he flees from is holy water; and the Reformer who allows the adversary the choice of weapons is a dead man before the ground is paced for the duel.

The Reformer of this type, sincere as he may be, devoted and disinterested, often narrows his outlook till he loses all sense of proportion; and, when violence of speech is followed by unscrupulousness of action, the last state of that man is worse than the first. As he develops these unamiable qualities he is increasingly unlikely to endear himself to his fellow-men; and he is thereby thrown back on his associates, many of them already infected with similar failings. Or he is forced to fellowship with himself alone; and thus he is in danger of developing the deadly disease which has aptly been termed "moral egotism." As a shrewd observer has pointed out, "no ego-

tism is so vulnerable as moral egotism; and in no field of action—not even in religion—is its influence more hurtful than in politics." Against this moral egotism few Reformers are immune, only those of complete sanity of body and mind, only those indeed whom nature has happily protected by a double proportion of that universal aseptic for which we have only an inadequate name—the sense-of-humor.

After all, "the best of men are but men at their best," as the Puritan soldier said long ago; and Reformers of this type, ardent and sincere, altho often violent and sometimes unscrupulous, need to be separated sharply from Reformers of another type, who almost justify Emerson's dismissal of them as "canters." Not quite do they justify it; for, altho their purpose is less single and altho their public spirit is contaminated by self-seeking, they are not altogether humbugs, and they do really believe in what they preach. They are honestly interested in the Reform they are advocating, even tho they are far more interested in themselves. They urge it partly for its own sake, no doubt, but partly also that they may claim credit to themselves for its accomplishment. They do not so much identify themselves with the movement as they identify the movement with themselves. They wish to see the cause conquer, but they are even more eager to

push themselves into the best places in the triumphal procession,—not too far behind the big drum. They are ever voluble in interviews and ever vociferous on the platform. They live in the spot-light of publicity, and they are ever seeking the bubble reputation in the camera's mouth.

Far more than the over-strenuous enthusiasts of the first type do these self-advertising notoriety-mongers of this second type bring discredit on the movements with which they see their advantage in associating themselves. Even if they are not wholly hypocrites, they stand forth offensive in the sight of man. They justify Emerson's liking for "the strong and worthy persons who support the social order without hesitation or misgiving." They justify the hearty contempt which the better class of practical politicians, who are unpretentiously engaged in real work, so often express toward Reformers in general, and which Conkling crystallized in the cynical saying already quoted. They are the originals of the sham Reformer whom Ibsen set on the stage in *Stensgaard* and whom Sardou satirized as *Rabagas*—altho they often have commingled with their self-seeking somewhat more honesty of purpose than we find in the contemptible creatures etched by the Norwegian dramatist and by the Parisian playwright.

They are not plain hypocrites, like *Tartuffe*, for not only do they lack the depth of that ap-

palling personality, but they are sincere, even if they are shallow. With them Reform is no mere cloak, snatcht up hurriedly in the hour of need; it is the garment they have chosen to clothe themselves in, that they may take part in the parade. They are really soldiers in the cause whose uniform they wear; and they are volunteers also, but they have an eye to the bounty and to the pension. That they are marching forward with the flag never prevents them from seeking their own profit, often in devious ways. Some of the most contemptible intriguing it was ever my misfortune to behold was the work of one who was forever "holding high the banner of the Ideal"; and quite the most contemptible act of selfish cowardice within my knowledge was committed by one who stood before the public as the very embodiment of Reform, and who as a Reformer was perfectly sincere, although undeniably self-seeking. When we come to contrast the two types of Reformer that have been considered, we find that it is difficult to draw a precise line marking off the one from the other. At the head of one type there is stalwart disinterestedness, and at the foot of the other there is shallow self-seeking, but in the middle they shade into each other by imperceptible degrees, since there is often more than a suspicion of self-esteem in the one and more than a leaven of sincerity in the other.

A third type there is, which it is not easy to set off sharply from the second. In this class we find the men whose fervor in behalf of a noble cause seems to have its source, more or less, in their desire to get into better company than their reputation would warrant. They seek to put forward their civic virtues as a plea in extenuation for their private looseness or their business laxity. They are the bad men who advocate one good thing, possibly because no man is absolutely bad, but more probably because they see in this advocacy a chance to associate themselves with good men, who would not otherwise be willing to fellowship with them. Reform makes strange bedfellows, and even men of the purest character are rarely over-particular in refusing the aid of voluntary allies whose own record is far from spotless. Perhaps it would be unfair to call them wolves in sheep's clothing, because the wolf rarely appears in that costume until after he has sated his hunger for lamb; but it is not unfair to describe them as black sheep who are seeking to smuggle themselves back into the flock of honest folk. Perhaps, again, it would not be just to dismiss them frankly as self-seeking hypocrites; but there is no injustice in suggesting that they are

> Ready to make up for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to.

Sometimes they persist in their own evil practices, while denouncing virtuously the ill deeds of others. For instance, one of the newspapers of New York, which was energetic in proclaiming the necessity of abolishing the spoils system and of introducing the Australian ballot, was at that time the property of a notorious railroad-wrecker, who was using its financial columns to support his own stock-jobbing. But more often than not they pretend to have abjured sack and to desire to live cleanly. They resemble certain heroines of the modern drama, in that they have "a past" which they want to have overlookt or condoned in the present. Thus, some years ago, there appeared as the chief advocate of a so-called legal reform a lawyer of commanding ability whose own indefensible practices as the counsel of Fisk and Gould had brought him perilously near to being disbarred.

Another example is even more significant. In one of the largest cities in the Union a few years ago, in a truce of the interminable campaign against municipal misrule, suddenly half a dozen young men projected themselves into view as the conspicuous champions of civic virtue in its austerest attitude. They stood up to be counted in favor of a procedure which did not commend itself to older and wiser leaders. They came out broadly in the full glare of newspaper notoriety.

But who were these obscure Reformers who offered themselves up like imitators of Arnold of Winkelried? However futile their act, at least their intention was worthy; and most people dismissed them from mind as merely misguided enthusiasts. But a gentleman with a wide acquaintance and a long memory happened to drop the remark in a club that it was not a little curious that two of these indiscreet Reformers had been partners in business with different friends of his, and that his friends had each of them been forced to dissolve the partnership from disapproval of the practices of the young men who were now prancing into the lists as knights of civic purity. He had mentioned no names; but another member of the club promptly spoke up and asked if Mr. So-and-so was meant, mentioning one of the half dozen. The answer was that Mr. So-and-so had not been in the mind of the first speaker. Whereupon the second said that Mr. So-and-so could be added to the other two; "He was my partner a few years ago, and I broke up the firm because I did not like the way he did business."

The examples of this type of Reformer are far less numerous than the examples of the two other types; but a Reform movement is singularly fortunate that has not among its adherents more than one man of this unworthy character, often thrusting himself into undue prominence. There

is yet a fourth group, which is likely to be the largest of all, and also the least useful and the least estimable. This consists of the men and women who are forever longing for novelty for its own sake, and who wish to see the establisht order change, merely because it is the establisht order, and merely because they themselves are too flighty to feel the need of keeping the ancient landmarks. They are not devoted to any one Reform in particular, but to all Reforms in general. They are wholly without the discrimination which warns us that, when a man is marching to a tune inaudible to others, he may be keeping step to the music of the spheres or he may be following the footsteps of the Rat-Wife.

They are the faddists, the freaks, the cranks, who take up with every passing whim of the moment and who tag themselves to the tail of every cause, whether it is wise or otherwise, incapable of espousing a true Reform for its merits, and ready to embrace a sham simply because it has been accepted by others as scatter-brained as they are themselves. To-day they may be vegetarians, who clothe themselves only in animal fiber; yesterday they revered the revelations of the spirit-rappers; to-morrow they will rely on absent treatment for the relief of chronic disease. They vaunt themselves as Theosophists for a season, only to appear the next year as Christian Scientists.

We find them plentifully in the Salem witchcraft-trials, in the more violent religious revivals, and again in the Transcendental movement. In the pages of Lowell's pungent paper on Thoreau, we have the brilliant record of his recollection of this riffraff of Reform as he had occasion to observe it in his youth. They cling to the skirts of every cause, impeding its advance and making it more or less ridiculous. Sometimes they are numerous enough to capture the control of the organization, which is sure to founder then, even if it had been in sight of port. Sometimes they are weak-willed creatures who scarcely know what it is that they really want; and sometimes they are hysteric extremists who, in the apt phrase of the late Charles Dudley Warner, will not be satisfied until the President of the United States is a black woman.

When John Morrissey, prize-fighter and ward politician, once walkt from his gambling-house at Saratoga to the town-hall to size up a Reform convention then in session there, he came out promptly, declaring that he was not afraid of anything those fellows could do, since they were "only a lot of long-haired men and of short-haired women." What the ward politician treated with contempt, the practical man has no respect for. These feeble folk, light-witted and loud-voiced, are forever warning away the hard-headed and

strong-armed men of affairs, without whose sympathy no cause is likely to make much progress, and without whose active aid nothing lasting is likely to be accomplisht. It is only when these men of affairs conquer their disgust for the creatures of this type, and ally themselves with the devoted enthusiasts of the first group, that any Reform begins really to have a chance of success. The enthusiasts supply the moral fervor, and the men of affairs supply the solid common sense, without an abundance of which nothing ever gets itself done in this world.

These men of affairs, not original enthusiasts, and only tardily converted by reasons which appeal to their intelligence, make up a fifth class of Reformer, the men interested in a specific cause and carrying it steadily to its final accomplishment without haste and without rest. They, and they alone, assure the victory. The original enthusiasts must convert them or nothing will happen; for until they are converted the case is hopelesss. When they begin to join in sufficient numbers, the end is near; the cause is won, and the final triumph is then only a question of time. They are not the profest philanthropists whom Emerson shrank from; they are "the strong and worthy men who support the social order," but who have been made to see the danger of some special leak in the ship of state and who are will-

ing to man the pumps and to lend a hand to the calking, returning promptly to their own work whenever this single task is finisht to their satisfaction. When they hold that the time has come, they do not hesitate; they enlist "for three years or the war." They take up the good work, heartily, fixing their eye on that, and overcoming their distaste for the company they have to keep. They are resolved to get the job done, even if they have to labor by the side of the freak and of the fraud, of the wild-eyed crank and of the semi-repentant crook.

Mr. Morley tells us that Gladstone had "none of that detachment often found among superior minds, which we honor for its disinterestedness, even while we lament its impotence in result." In other words, Gladstone was a practical politician. He was constructive, and not merely critical. He was not a moral egotist, but a public servant, who helped to get things done. No doubt, the Abolitionists, in spite of their constant wrangling with one another, and in spite of their occasional lack of patriotism, did arouse the attention of the country and did help to center it on an evil that needed to be rooted up; but the slaves were freed by Lincoln, the very practical politician, who had at least one characteristic in common with Gladstone, in that he never mistook for "courage or independence the unhappy

preference for having a party or an opinion exclusively for one's self." Lincoln was patient and long-suffering; he bided his time; he was at once persuasive and fearless, but he was never needlessly aggressive. He was wholly free from the unpleasant and unprofitable characteristic which Lowell declares to be a possession of too many Reformers—"that vindictive love of virtue which spreads the stool of repentance with thistle-burrs, before they invite the erring to seat themselves thereon."

It is not the amateur enthusiast who achieves lasting results, it is the professional politician of the higher type, a class far more numerous in this country than most of us are prepared to admit. He takes care of his fences, of course, but he serves the public faithfully to the best of his ability. He knows how to get things done, as he does not dwell alone in the clouds, but keeps his footing solidly on the soil. His idealism is practical, no doubt, but it is real enough. He is always an opportunist, taking the most he can get at the moment, however little it may be, and however insufficient he may deem it. He is not easily discouraged, for he knows only too well that "politics is one long second best"; and he is firmly resolved to get a little more the next time of asking, until which time he possesses his soul in patience, not having his heart set on any single

cause. He finds solid comfort in his firm belief that in the long run all Reforms are inevitable; they are certain to be establisht sooner or later; and if they never come to pass, the reason must be sought in the fact that they are not really Reforms, however plausible they may have appeared for a while.

This, indeed, is what most sharply sets off the practical politician of the better class from the narrower and more eager Reformers. He is a professional; and they are amateurs. He is free from the irascible impatience that makes them feverish. He is interested in many movements; and they have centered their energy on only one. He is likely to have far more confidence in the education of public opinion than in any swift overturning due to hasty legislation. Bitter experience has taught him that mere lawmaking is often worse than useless, since a law is never enforced properly when it has not public opinion behind it, and since the law itself is easily obtained and easily enforced when it is only the crystallization of the wish of the people. The amateurs put far too much faith in special measures and in legislative devices of one kind or another. The professional has a deep contempt for these patent-medicines of lawmaking; and he does not expect human nature to be changed in the twinkling of an eye just because a bill has been past

by the legislature. He does not believe that bad men will renounce their evil ways overnight, or that the millennium will certainly arrive the morning after election.

But the amateurs, the ardent advocates of a single cause, lack this self-restraint just as they lack the sense of proportion. The more hectic and hysteric their impatience, the more bitter their disappointment at the delay of the one Reform they have espoused. And their language is often as bitter as their disappointment; for enthusiasm is like milk, in that even boiling will not always prevent it from turning sour. They are likely to suffer from acute attacks of moral dyspepsia, in which they feel that all is for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds. They think scorn of the rest of us whom they have failed to convert; and they pour out the vials of their wrath on us. Their exacerbated invective is often sad evidence of the wisdom of Mr. Morley's assertion that "love of truth is, more often than we think, only a fine name for temper." They are prompt to predict the direst of calamities, since mankind has refused so far to adopt their sole specific for all evils; and not infrequently they seem to regret that their prophecies of evil are not swiftly enough fulfilled.

These unlovely characteristics account for the repulsion which many a worthy citizen feels for

the profest Reformers. He dislikes their over-vehemence; and he detests what seems to him their unpatriotic readiness to vilify their own country. He is swift to smile when he reads the contemptuous words of Emerson and Lowell and Curtis. But he is derelict to his duty as a good citizen if he is content to dismiss the Reformers from his mind and to go on his way self-satisfied, leaving things as they are and letting the affairs of the commonwealth take care of themselves. Eternal vigilance is the price of progress also, and he is not a good citizen if he is willing to relinquish full control to the professional politicians, who are not all faithful servants of the Republic and who have in their ranks a large proportion of the baser sort, selfish spoilsmen, seeking power for their own pocket all the time.

The mob of Reformers may be made up of men of every degree of sincerity and disinterestedness, and it may include all the varieties differentiated in the preceding paragraphs. Some of its members may be narrow and impetuous; some may be perfervid and foolish; some may be self-seeking and unscrupulous; and only a few may be unselfish and wise and efficient. We may smile at their exaggerations and at their diatribes; we may laugh at their conceit and their absurdities; we may be irritated by their perversities; but it is only at our peril that we stop our ears absolutely

to their appeals and their warnings. Reformers, lofty or lowly, perform a needed function; and in the machinery of society even the eccentric and crank may be useful.

We ought not to let our own sense-of-humor overcome our sense of duty. We may scoff at Reformers if we like, but we ought to work with them, when we must, profiting by their zeal and utilizing their energy. Even if there is warrant for suspicion sometimes, there is ever a core of true disinterestedness at the center; and, after all, even the long-haired men and the short-haired women may be agents in the uplift which gives a higher hope for humanity in the future. To refuse, once for all, to join hands with Reformers, because of distaste for some of their deeds and of disgust at some of their work, is to stand by while the clock of progress is stopt. It is to help to stiffen the body politic into a Chinese lethargy. It is to renounce the keen pleasure of struggling sturdily for the establishment of justice. It is to lag lazily behind, when nobler men are striving to prove the everlasting truth of a fine saying of Pascal's, which has been rendered into rhythmic English: "Ebbing and flowing, yet ever progressing, the tides of life creep up the sands of Time."

(1905.)

"THOSE LITERARY FELLOWS"

"THOSE LITERARY FELLOWS"

IN one of the later decades of the nineteenth century a politician who felt himself to be pre-eminently practical, sought to dismiss all further consideration of a certain proposed measure by the discourteous assertion that it was advocated only by a lot of "those damned literary fellows." This practical politician probably prided himself on being one of the plain people; and no doubt he believed that he was appealing to a widespread prejudice. Certainly he would have been as deeply pained as he would have been astonisht could he have foreseen the second administration of the twentieth century, when the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Ambassador of the French Republic and later the Ambassador of the British Empire, should be, all of them, literary fellows. Had he survived to behold this strange coincidence, it would not have been easy for him to account for the high esteem in which Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hay, M. Jusserand and Mr. Bryce were held by the practical politicians and by the plain people also.

Yet there may be profit for men of letters as a

class, if we take time to ask ourselves what underlay the distrust of this practical politician and to inquire what warrant he had for it and what support he might hope to find in the opinion of the average man upon whose sympathy the professional office-seeker must ever rely. And we may begin by admitting that this plain-spoken spoilsman was only voicing an opinion long standing and widespread. However inexplicable it may seem to us, it is a fact, that both the plain people and the practical politicians have often displayed an undeniable suspicion of the literary fellow; and they have often acted on the belief that he was likely to be little better than an impractical theorist. And this is no new thing; Machiavelli, for example, was a man of letters, with the acutest insight into practical politics, as the game was played in his time and in his country; and yet the code of practise which he drew up for the guidance of his prince was not rewarded by the gift of responsible office. The little Italian republics of the Renascence,—like the great American republic centuries later,—often availed themselves of their men of letters as envoys to other powers; but they rarely entrusted these literary fellows with positions of authority. However ably and adroitly Dante and Boccaccio and Petrarch might acquit themselves of their missions abroad, they were not rewarded at home

by being made rulers of men. And here in the United States, while we have been glad to see ourselves worthily represented in foreign parts by Irving, Bancroft and Lowell, we have not often been moved to elect men of letters to high place in the nation or the state; and even when we have seemed to choose them for office the election has generally gone to a statesman who was also an author rather than to an author who was also a statesman. The fervid rhetorician who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the historian of the 'Winning of the West,' are the only men of letters who have ever risen to the presidency; and their interest in politics is plainly acuter than their interest in authorship.

In the opening chapter of Cooper's 'Pathfinder,' an old sailor on a trip thru the woods is told by an Indian that the smoke they see curling above the trees must come from a fire made by a white man, since it is denser than it should be, because it arises from wood wetter than any fuel a redskin would ever use. "Tuscarora too cunning to make fire with water," the Indian explains; "pale-face too much book and burn anything; much book, little know." And the old sailor readily admits that this is reasonable and that "the chief has sensible notions of things in his own way." A little later in the same tale, Leatherstocking himself declares that he never

"believed much in the learning of them that dwell in towns, for I never yet met with one that had an eye for a rifle or a trail." What is this but a belated echo of Festus's saying?—"Too much learning hath made thee mad."

Perhaps a part of the hostility toward Cooper himself, which was rampant about 1840, was due to the disgust of the journalists of that provincial period, evoked by the spectacle of a man of letters, a mere teller of tales, who ventured to hold firmly and to express frankly opinions of his own about the social order, about politics and about statecraft. These were themes which the newspaper men reserved for themselves and which no literary fellow had a right to meddle with. The journalists of those days may have been irritated by Cooper's plain speech and by his curt contempt; but they had a deeper grievance. They deemed it a gross piece of impertinence for a novelist to stray from his story-telling and they bade him stick to his last. In like manner the practical politicians of a New England state have recently waxed indignant at the unwarranted interference of one of Cooper's disciples as a historical novelist when this story-teller made bold to protest against political conditions which seemed to him intolerable.

It is only fair to admit unhesitatingly that there is not a little to be urged in behalf of this belief

that men of letters, when they see fit to discuss political affairs, often talk before they think. They frequently obtrude political opinions, which are not the cautious result of a deliberate examination of the whole situation. Perhaps the novelist and the poet are inclined to be somewhat impractical; and perhaps they are not more likely than any other member of the community to be gifted with political sagacity and with statesmanlike insight into the needs of the future. Perhaps too many literary fellows are wont to take themselves too seriously and to claim that their possession of "the vision and the faculty divine" makes them wiser than the rest of the world. When Brandes suggested to Ibsen in 1870 that the dramatist had not studied politics enough to be entitled to express opinions, he retorted that knowledge came to him by intuition, asserting that "the poet's essential task is to see, not to reflect. For me, in particular, there would be danger in too much reflection." Victor Hugo's habitual attitude was as absurdly self-sufficient as Ibsen's. Even poets and novelists of indisputable rank have often revealed themselves fantastic and absurd in their rash adventures into political speculation. In the ideal communities they have vaguely glimpst, there is frequently a thin unreality. They are wont to balloon themselves up into a rarefied atmosphere where the ordinary

man cannot breathe. The plain people would have been sadly misguided had they attempted to take their politics from Shelley, for one, or from Balzac, for another; nor would they have found a much more solid support in Hugo or in Hawthorne. Cooper stands out as an exception among later poets and novelists, in that he had thought seriously about the organization of society.

It is in his delightful biography of the author of the Leatherstocking Tales that Professor Lounsbury has occasion to refer to the alleged poet, Percival; and the witty critic tells us that as this versifier "invariably proved himself entirely destitute of common sense in his ordinary conduct, he was led to fancy that he was not only a man of ability, but a man of genius." Not a few half-baked geniuses seem to have accepted the theory implied,—that genius is always half-baked. And not a few of those who ought to know better lazily consent to this false view, admitting a plea of the irresponsibility of genius as an adequate excuse for the weaknesses of Coleridge and Poe and for the vagaries of Villon and Musset. But nothing ought to be clearer than that real genius never shirks responsibility and that it is ever buttrest by common sense. The truly great men have been idealists who had a sustaining grasp on the realities of life.

A mandarin complacency is not a characteristic of the truly great man of letters. Rather is it the truly small literary fellow who is likely to reveal an insufferable self-sufficiency and to assume that his gift of expression supplies him also with opinions worth expressing. The narrow-mindedness of the mere literary fellow of this shallow species was never more cruelly self-exposed than in the journal of the Goncourts. They had a pretty gift of description and even a certain felicity of sentimental analysis; but they were appallingly ignorant and fundamentally unintelligent. They were absolutely incapable of apprehending a stimulating generalization; and yet their marvellous conceit prevented their seeing the pitiful figure they presented at the Magny dinners when Taine and Renan were discussing questions of large importance. Not only were their minds hermetically closed to a new idea, but they were actually unaware that it was new and that it was an idea.

Even in discussing his own special art, the poet and the novelist may disclose his sharp limitations. While many of the most suggestive and inspiring of esthetic essays have been due to the pens of the practitioners of the several arts, Fromentin and Mr. La Farge, for instance, Stevenson and Mr. Howells,—artists who happened also to possess a keen insight into the principles of their

several crafts,—a large proportion of the treatises on poetry and on fiction written by the poets themselves and by the novelists are devoid of any real value. The writers reveal the fact that even tho they may have the gift of the lyrist or of the story-teller, they lack the gift of the critic. These essays prove once again that the artist does not need to know more about his art than how to practise it and that he may himself apply his principles unconsciously and yet satisfactorily, altho he is quite unable to formulate them for others, in default of the philosophic endowment which is not a necessary part of the artistic equipment.

Mrs. Siddons and Signor Salvini were great actors, beyond all question; but the papers they prepared on the art of acting were entirely without significance. Victor Hugo was the foremost of French poets; but his famous manifesto of revolt, the preface to 'Cromwell,' in which he sought to declare a body of doctrine and to lay down the law of poetic evolution, is a revelation of his incapacity for critical thought. So also the series of strenuous essays in which Zola, a novelist of epic power, undertook to forecast the development of fiction, shows that he failed to understand even his own method. Now, if these artists and these men of letters are sometimes discovered to be hopelessly at sea when they set out to consider their own special departments of

human endeavor, how much more astray are they likely to find themselves when they go outside the boundaries of their own calling.

It was in his incisive essay on Shakspere that Bagehot, shrewdest of observers, was moved to explain "the reason why so few good books are written." He asserted that it was because "so few people that can write, know anything. In general, an author has always lived in a room, has read books, has cultivated science, is acquainted with the style and sentiments of the best authors; but he is out of the way of employing his own eyes and ears. He has nothing to hear and nothing to see. His life is a vacuum." This may seem harsh; but it is not unjust to a large proportion of mere literary fellows. They know little or nothing except books. They have cultivated the means of expression; but they have to express only what they find in their libraries. They do not know the world beyond their bookshelves. They are men of letters, not men of action;—and often they are not men of thought. When one of them happens to have a doctrine he can so wing his message with flame that it reaches the hearts of men; and this is what made Rousseau so powerful and so dangerous. And, on the other hand, when the man of action happens also to have the gift of expression, we get one of the books the world will not willingly

let die,—the 'Commentaries' of Cæsar, for instance, the 'Autobiography' of Cellini, and the 'Memoirs' of Grant.

The attitude of the practical politician and of the plain people is thus seen to have a certain justification in the frequent willingness of literary fellows to declare opinions which are not the result of study and which, therefore, had better not be made public. To say this is to suggest that the man of letters who uses his power of expression as tho it gave him a right to speak with authority about themes on which he has bestowed only superficial attention, is really a traitor to his craft, in that he exposes the whole guild of authors to a contempt which is not without excuse.

Altho it may be confest that literary fellows have not infrequently laid themselves open to the reproach of talking when they really had nothing to say, it needs to be noted that some portion of the vague distrust of the plain people here in the United States has had another origin. It seems to be a survival of our inheritance from early colonial conditions, when the sturdy settler had more or less reason to look with suspicion on all possessors of superior education as likely to be supporters of the aristocratic tradition which he was striving to disestablish. "In the minds not only of the Pilgrims and the Puritans, but also, and in even stronger degree, in those of the

Quakers, the Huguenots and the Palatinate Germans, intellectual activity that went beyond the limits set by theology or practical politics was associated with culture," so Professor Giddings has reminded us; and "culture was associated with leisure, opportunity, worldly indulgence. These, in turn, were associated with oppression." The same acute observer suspects that there was in the early American days a feeling of hostility to worldly learning that partook of class-conscious antagonism; "to be overmuch interested in merely intellectual pursuits was to be in a degree disloyal to the common cause."

Closely akin to this easily understood hostility, there is another inherited feeling born of our primitive conditions and still surviving here and there long after those conditions have departed. In a new community, blazing its way in a new land as best it can, everyone must do everything for himself, since there is no one at hand to do it for him. There can be no division of labor, no specialization of function; and every man is compelled to be a jack-of-all trades. This breeds in the race self-reliant resourcefulness; it stimulates ingenuity and inventiveness. Men forced to find out new ways of doing old things are trained to face an emergency and to front the unexpected need. This undaunted facility in

turning one's hand to anything is now an acquired characteristic of the American people, and it is one of our most precious assets in the economic struggle for the markets of the world.

But this transmitted inheritance has one obvious disadvantage. It tends to spread abroad a belief that any man can do anything about as well as any other man can do it. It leads to the assumption that any man is fit for any post. It makes us contemptuous of all special knowledge and resentful of all expert advice. It accentuates the suspicion which the average man of our English-speaking stock has been wont to show toward the "theorist," and which has often tempted him to the overt absurdity of declaring that certain things "may be all very well in theory but they won't work!"

Once more candor compels the confession that now and again the practical man's contempt for the theorist has been intensified by the occasional mistakes of those experts who were not quite so expert as they thought themselves. Once upon a time a theorist proved to his own satisfaction that a ship could not possibly cross the Atlantic under steam because it never could carry coal enough. And a later theorist was moved to explain that an ice-yacht could not possibly go faster than the wind.

It has happened also that rule-of-thumb read-

iness has sometimes achieved an immediate result not so swiftly attained by a more scientific thoroness. In the early days of the Civil War a general halted his troops on the banks of a river half a mile wide, ordered his engineers to make plans for a bridge and informed a New England colonel that the building of the bridge would be confided to the Yankee regiment. The next afternoon the colonel called on the general, who told him that the engineers would soon have the plans ready. The colonel smiled as he answered: "I don't much care about the pictures;—you see, my boys have got the bridge built!"

In a community where this sort of thing could happen, there need be no wonder that the practical man was impatient of the theorist and of the expert. He was sufficient to himself, and he had no use for them. But as backwoods conditions disappeared, division of labor had to appear. Specialization of function is the mark of advancing civilization. There is no better evidence of our progress than the avidity with which the practical men in charge of our mighty industrial enterprizes are now seeking out experts and snapping up all the theorists within reach. And the results of this broadening of vision are increasingly evident outside the field of industry. The American public is apparently awakening to the fact that its servants had better be trained

for service, and that its consuls, for instance, will be able to benefit the commerce of the country more amply if they have been forced to fit themselves for their special work.

Probably this broadening of vision will sooner or later effect a wholesome change in the attitude of the plain people toward the expert, the theorist and the literary fellow. Possibly it may even modify the curiously inaccurate opinion which the average man seems to have as to the college professor. This opinion is apparently a survival from the days when any superannuated clergyman was accepted as an adequate occupant for any chair in any institution of learning. Half a century ago the program of studies in all of our colleges was narrow and rigid; and anybody who had taken the course in his youth held himself ready in his old age to give instruction in any of the prescribed studies. A little more than a score of years ago, whenever any chair at Columbia College happened to fall vacant, an application was promptly presented by a certain aged alumnus who proffered himself as the proper person for the post, equally willing to impart instruction in Greek or in mathematics, in economics or in history. While this worthy clergyman failed of his appointment at Columbia, there were other men no better equipt who did secure chairs in other institutions, as tho to confirm the departed

belief that those who had failed in everything else were at least capable of teaching.

The program of studies has been enormously extended of late and it now covers many new subjects,—biology, sociology, psychology,—as to which the man in the street can have only the haziest notions. With the usual conceit of ignorance he is unwilling to take the unknown for the magnificent. Only too often is he inclined to dismiss these new sciences as futile and to hold those who teach these novel subjects as vain triflers, not to be taken seriously. And here once more, the fault is sometimes to be laid at the door of the professors themselves rather than at that of the plain people. Now and again one of them, not restrained by the caution his scientific training ought to have instilled in him, rashly adventures himself in fields in which his own special knowledge gives him no advantage, and in which he himself is no wiser than the next man. It is indeed a sorry spectacle to see a professor of rhetoric holding forth on hypnotism and a professor of experimental psychology emitting empty opinions about the condition of English orthography and the administration of the criminal law. Bumptious outpourings of this type cannot fail to bring a certain discredit upon scholarship itself and to confirm the man in the street in a contemptuous distrust of the man of science.

Professor Lounsbury has reminded us that general information is often but another name for specific ignorance. And the reverse of this is true also, since special knowledge is not infrequently accompanied by a lack of general information. Excessive specialization may lead to excessive narrowness of vision. Many a professor, scientifically trained in Germany and conscientiously confining himself to the dative case, may go thru life without ever attaining that knowledge of the world and that wider outlook upon life, which a broad education ought to have bestowed.

While there are a few professors here and there who are lacking in breadth, and while there are also a few who are not afraid to go out of their depth at the risk of floundering in muddy water, a large proportion of the men who now hold the more important chairs in our more important universities have not allowed their scholarship to crush them. They are scholars, first of all, of course, and this they should be; but they are also good citizens, seriously interested in the teeming life about them and taking a manly part in the movement for social uplift. They profit by their academic detachment from the business of making money to attain a wider perspective. They tend to be idealists, like the men of letters; they want to peer into the future and to relate what must be done to-day with what will

have to be done to-morrow. Therefore they are dissatisfied with the makeshift devices of the practical politicians, who often seek only to remove the symptoms of a distemper in the body politic without regard to the real cause of the disease.

As they have no hesitation in expressing their disapproval of quack legislation, they are likely to come into frequent collision with both the business man who wants an evil condition remedied in a hurry and with the professional politician who is swift to pass any act which he thinks the people want, regardless of its ultimate effect. And here is a solid reason for the hostility they often arouse. The practical man of affairs, whether in business or in politics, is prone to take short views and to hold that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Therfore he is moved to swift wrath when the college professors provoke him by their calm assertion that no pill has ever yet cured the earthquake.

While the well-meaning man who wishes to have everything made better overnight is offended by the disinterested attitude taken by the college professor and by the literary fellow toward public questions, the man who is actually profiting by present conditions is fiercely resentful. He is belligerent in defending his own, and he is skeptical as to the disinterestedness of his opponents. He impugns their good faith; he imputes unworthy

motives; and he relieves his feelings by lumping the literary fellow and the college professor in a comprehensive anathema. And here he exhibits a class-conscious antagonism too frankly selfish not to defeat itself by self-disclosure.

It is an evidence of the common sense of the American people that the prejudice against the college professor, like that against the man of letters, is rapidly dying down and that there is beginning to be public recognition and public appreciation of the service they are rendering to the Commonwealth. This recognition is displayed in the increasing frequency with which their advice and their aid is sought in solving the problems of society, and in the greater weight which is attacht to their opinions upon the subjects they have studied. This appreciation is due partly to the fact that the public is at last discovering the improvement in the quality of the professors in consequence of the development of the American university, more especially in the larger urban communities; and it is due also in part to a growing understanding of the real value and importance of the expert and the theorist.

It is easy to give striking instances of this increasing reliance of the public upon the university for expert aid; and perhaps I may be pardoned if I present a few of them from the recent history of the institution with which I am most familiar.

Probably it would not be difficult to select examples as significant from the later experiences of any other of the larger universities in the larger cities. The admirable school-law of New York, now incorporated in the charter of the city, was due largely to the skill and foresight of one Columbia professor; and another Columbia professor was a member of the commission which prepared the charter itself. A third sat on the commission for revising the tax-system of the state; and a fourth had a seat in the Panama Canal commission. A fifth went out to San Francisco to take charge of the relief-work immediately after the earthquake; and a sixth has had to ask for leave twice, first to act as assistant Secretary of State and then to serve as secretary of the commission which signed the treaty of peace between Spain and the United States. Two of my colleagues have recently declined calls to take charge of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, while a third has accepted the presidency of the Carnegie Institution.

It would be easy also to bring forward many instances of the practical efficiency of men of letters. One literary fellow, here in New York, laid the solid foundation of tenement-house reform. Another, in Washington, prevented the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire. A

third had establisht the Naval Academy at Annapolis against the protests of the practical politicians of his time. It was a literary fellow, risen to be prime minister of Great Britain, who had the daring imagination which led him to acquire control of the Suez Canal, and thus to bring about the ultimate supremacy of his country over Egypt. And it is to the undying honor of the men of letters of France—the so-called "intellectuals"—that in the blackest hours of the Dreyfus iniquity, they stept forward to insist on the duty of doing right even tho the heavens should fall.

We can see a good augury for the future in the prominent position now awarded by public opinion in America to the college president. The more or less tolerant contempt which the average man has sometimes displayed toward the mere professor he has never felt toward the president. He knows little enough about the work of the professor and about the needful qualifications for any particular chair; but he cannot help perceiving that the president must be a man of affairs, having a knowledge of the practical things of life, such as the president of a bank or of a railroad needs must have. Altho the man in the street does not happen to know it, the American college president occupies a position without parallel in Europe; and this position, lofty and detacht, gives him a platform from

which to speak with authority. Any one who will call the roll of the men now at the head of our older institutions of learning cannot fail to be struck with the fact that almost every one of them is a scholar, who is also far more than a mere scholar. And yet they are, all of them, professors who have been promoted from the ranks.

College professor and literary fellow, expert and theorist, seem at last to be coming into their own. It was in the nineteenth century that the professional politician was guilty of the sneer which has served as a text for these random remarks. Long before the twenty-first century shall loom before us, we may expect to find that the man in the street will have experienced a change of heart. Perhaps we may even hope for a happy day when no smile will come to any lip on reading the cry of Napoleon's soldiers in Egypt as they formed square to repel the charge of the Mamelukes:—"Asses and savans to the center!"

But in order that this change of opinion may be effected, it is incumbent on the literary fellows and the college professors, on the theorists and the experts, so to control their utterances and so to direct their energies that the plain people will have no excuse for resuming again the suspicious attitude of bygone days. It will be their duty to

seek to attain to the type of the cultivated man as set forth by President Eliot,—"not a weak, critical, fastidious creature, vain of a little exclusive information or of an uncommon knack in Latin verse or mathematical logic," but "a man of quick perceptions, broad sympathies and wide affinities, responsive yet independent, self-reliant but deferential, loving truth and candor but also moderation and proportion, courageous but gentle, not finisht but perfecting." And the closer we can come up to this ideal, which is Emerson's also, the less we shall fall behind that of Isocrates, who declared that by an educated man he understood "one who can deal with all that comes upon him day by day; who is honest and mannerly in society; who rules his desires; who is not spoilt by good fortune."

(1909.)

STANDARDS OF SUCCESS

[This address was delivered at the centenary of Miami University in June, 1909, and again at the opening exercises of Columbia University in September, 1909.]

STANDARDS OF SUCCESS

I

NOT long ago a distinguisht lawyer of the Middle West, pleading the cause of one of the societies for improving civic conditions, riskt the assertion that the higher life of the American people "has been drugged with a spirit of mercenary materialism," and that "political self-seeking and unlimited corporate greed have become a national religion," while material aggrandizement is "leading us in the direction of national decay." Altho this charge is overdrawn and is likely to be thrown out by the grand jury of enlightened public opinion, there is conviction in his later statement that mere material prosperity is what is too commonly known as "success in life," whereas "in reality it is failure," for "it confounds the end with the means," since we have reacht only "the portals of success when we have become wealthy and influential. Our culture is more or less shallow, and our lives are more or less limited and crippled, unless we are patriotic and unselfish. We are like plants

which put forth the buds of promise but never reach the blossoming stage."

It may be admitted, at once, that in the mouth of the ordinary American of to-day the word "success" is usually interpreted to mean material prosperity, the attainment of a comfortable fortune, the acquisition of the assured position which money generally gives. But when we ask whether this interpretation is either specially American or specially novel, we are likely to come to the conclusion that it is neither, and that ever since our modern civilization emerged out of the Dark Ages, there has never been a time or a place when the average man found any other meaning in the word. To the large majority of mankind always and everywhere the outward and visible sign of success is "money in the bank,"—or whatever may be the immediate equivalent of this.

Indeed, this must needs endure so long as most men have to spend their lives battling with the waves in the strenuous effort to keep themselves afloat. To measure success in terms of material prosperity may be sordid and it may be dangerous to the commonwealth; but it is natural enough and it marks no sudden fall from grace. Even tho this standard of success may seem to some to be more exclusively accepted by us just now, the acceptance is not at all peculiar to the Ameri-

can of the twentieth century. It is only what has long been visible both in France and in England; and the industrial development in Germany has brought about the same state of affairs even in that land of soldiers and philosophers. When one of my Columbia colleagues was a student at Berlin thirty years ago, he was once told by a native that the Americans "worshipt the dollar," —to which he promptly retorted that the Germans had a similar god, who was only one-quarter as powerful.

The real question that confronts us when we seek to attain an understanding of the present attitude of the American people is not whether success is here taken to mean material prosperity, but whether material prosperity is not received by us as the final test of success and as the sole touchstone of a finisht career. And this is a question as important as it is difficult to answer. If we are admitting that the acquisition of money is the only standard of a well-spent life, then indeed are we in danger of confounding the end with the means. Then are we hailing the man who has merely entered the portal as tho he had conquered the inner citadel. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

While material prosperity is, of necessity, the immediate aim of the average man, in the thick

of the struggle for life, it ought not to be his only aim; and just so soon as he can feel his feet firm on the ground beneath him, it ought not to be his chief aim. And what may be, for a while, almost the whole duty of the inferior man, is only a small part of the duty of the superior man. When the desperate dread of want is no longer driving us to leisureless toil, and when a fair measure of material prosperity has been achieved by abundant energy or by early advantage, then the further accumulation of wealth ceases to deserve exclusive attention, since it is no longer needful to the individual or to the community. To continue to put forth all one's power for the sake of needless acquisition is a short-sighted selfishness which is not success but failure. It is a failure of the individual, which, if widely multiplied, must be fatal to the community.

There is no denying that there are now in the United States glaring examples of this failure, masquerading as success; nor can it be doubted that many if not most of those who are in the thick of the strife are willing enough to welcome this sham as tho it was the genuine article. They are, as it were, hypnotized by the revolving glitter before their eyes; and they are in no condition to appreciate the truth of Beecher's saying that "there are a great many poor men who are rich and a great many rich men who are poor." They do

not see that if they got what they are seeking, they would swiftly discover the imposture that they played on themselves. They cannot be expected to find this out until it is too late, until they have failed according to their own temporary standard, or until they have succeeded according to the standard which will betray them in the end. They have energy and determination and ability; but they are bending their powers to the attainment of an object which will never adequately reward the effort. They have not taken time to plan the journey before them and to decide whether they really want to arrive at the port for which they seem to be steering. "Most men," so Lowell has told us, "make the voyage of life, as if they carried sealed orders, which they were not to open until they were in mid-ocean."

But while there are too many men in the United States who are now recklessly making this blunder, they have had predecessors not a few in other lands. Even the wisest of men, who might be expected to have laid out the course carefully and cautiously, have been not infrequently shipwreckt by the false charts they have made for themselves and by the faithless compass they have chosen to follow. For example, consider the career of Bacon; no one ever sought success more deliberately than he did and with more

abundant faculties; and his essays,—wherein we may read that "all rising to great place, is by a winding stair,"—might be the handbook of those who wish to make their way in the world by worldly ways. But who is there now who wants the success that Bacon attained at the last? Or turn to Machiavelli, whose powerful intellect was only a little inferior to Bacon's; no one ever laid down more boldly the principles whereby a ruthless man might carve his path to success as he saw it; and his precepts seem to be accepted as valid and to be relentlessly applied by certain of the industrial princes of to-day. Yet the name of Machiavelli is now a by-word and a hissing; and the fact that this fate is not wholly deserved does not help him.

Contrast Bacon and Machiavelli with Franklin, whose moral code may be lacking in elevation, but whose practical wisdom was lofty enough He preached a humdrum doctrine, that honesty is the best policy, that a penny saved is a penny gained, and that if you keep your shop your shop will keep you,—precepts which bore fruit in the lives of countless thousands of his future fellow-citizens. But he accomplisht the rarer feat of conforming his practise to his preaching; and thereby he found himself in his maturity in the possession of a comfortable fortune, whereupon he gave up the task of making any more money

and lookt out for an ampler and more congenial field of labor. To a man of active mind and energetic body, leisure could be but the liberty of choice of a more interesting occupation. In his own freedom from mere money-making he saw the opportunity for a larger public service. He has told us that he early made the rule of never asking for an office and of never declining one; and in the second half of his career he was laboring as effectively for the public as in the first half he had toiled for himself.

Franklin was able to aid in achieving the liberty of his native land, only because he had first won freedom for himself. "Those only are free men," said Froude, "who have had patience to learn the conditions of a useful and honorable existence, who have overcome their own ignorance and their own selfishness, who have become masters of themselves." It was because Franklin had been untiring in overcoming his ignorance and because he was masterful in conquering his own selfishness that he was able to fill out perhaps the most outwardly successful career yet achieved by any American, even if we admit that his limitations shut him out from certain of the highest things in life. His later and larger success was due to his never being satisfied with mere material prosperity, to his never confounding the means with the end, and to his generous under-

standing of the duty of every man toward his fellows.

It was Lamennais who declared that "human society is founded on the self-surrender or sacrifice of man to men, or of every man to all men; and sacrifice is the essence of every true society." Franklin might have smiled at the eloquence of the phrase; but he would have acknowledged its truth,—and he might even have explained that self-surrender and sacrifice need not be painful and that in the long run they are often pleasurable in the highest degree. Certainly he would have approved of a passage in one of President Butler's addresses, which insists that "the moral education of the individual human being to the point where he realizes the squalid poverty of selfishness and the boundless riches of service, will alone lift civilization to a higher plane and make true democracy secure."

The moral education of the average human being, here and now, in the United States, at the beginning of the twentieth century, has not reacht this point. Indeed, it may be doubted whether it has ever been reacht or whether it will ever be reacht by the average human being in any country at any time,—for reasons which are obvious enough. And it may be that the acceptance of material prosperity as the sole standard of success has been wider in the past few years

in America than it ever was before. But to admit this, is not to admit that "political self-seeking and unlimited corporate greed have become a national religion," with the result of drugging the higher life with a "spirit of mercenary materialism." The evidence is plain to-day that even tho we may have started along the road to national decay, lured by the glamor of the success which glitters, we have seen the danger-signals in time, and that we are now ready to retrace our steps, even if we have not yet regained the right path.

II

It is a good sign that the attitude toward the very rich seems to be changing of late. They are beginning to feel themselves more or less under suspicion, however much the society-reporter may delight in snobbish adulation. No longer is there a belief that the mere heaping up of money is a sufficient service to the community. There is an increasing tendency to apply a stricter moral standard and to ask embarrassing questions. There is a desire to know where the money came from and whether it was honestly come by. There is a manifest intention to sharpen the laws so that processes of acquisition which may have been legal even if they were immoral shall hereafter be under the control of the courts. There is

awakening to the value of social service. There is a keener recognition of the fact that the really useful citizens cannot be measured by the money they possess. There is a closer scrutiny of character and a higher appreciation of its loftier types. There is a cordial welcome for those new men in public life, to some of whom it is possible to apply the noble words in which the younger Pliny described one of his friends,—"who did nothing for ostentation but all for conscience, who sought his reward of virtue in itself and not in the praise of men."

On the other hand, it is not a little unfortunate that there seems to be intensifying a prejudice toward the very rich as a class, without due discrimination between those who have inherited fortunes honestly gained and those who have amassed large wealth by predatory devices. At times, this prejudice may bear hardly on those "who think their innoxious indolence their security,"—to borrow Burke's phrase. But there are only too many among the inheritors of honest fortunes who mistake notoriety for fame and who alienate sympathy by foolish prodigality and by silly display. Some of them seem to spend large sums merely as a means of killing time,—forgetting that there is no known way of killing eternity. Some of them reveal the laxity of morals which is ever likely to result from the

conjunction of wealth and idleness. Some of them have taken part in that matrimonial exportation of heiresses, which seems especially revolting to the plain people. Most of them have failed to grasp the fact that an industrial community offers few opportunities to the selfish idler who has come into the stored savings of a father honored for his industry. A spendthrift who wastes the wealth he has inherited is likely to get his money's worth of repentance, sooner or later; but not a few of the fortunes recently inherited have been so vast that the weakling heir is really in no danger of reducing himself to actual poverty. He goes on his way, leading an empty life of lavish luxury, setting up a false standard for others and having very little real enjoyment himself.

The same unfortunate fate seems to have befallen some of those who, after a youth of honest toil, have suddenly found themselves in full manhood in the possession of large fortunes which they do not know how to put to any good use. Perhaps this class is larger just now in the United States than it has ever been before anywhere else, in consequence of the recent gigantic combinations of industrial enterprizes, whereby comparatively young fellows who had been engaged in building up the several businesses, laboring with all their might and finding their fun in their hard

work, have suddenly discovered themselves out of a job, and paid off with a huge sum of money which a few years earlier would have seemed to them beyond the dreams of avarice. It is not to be wondered that some of them lose their heads and that sometimes they lose their feet also.

It is in his narrative of Catiline's conspiracy that the shrewd Sallust points out the reason for the failure of certain of his earlier contemporaries in the final years of the Roman republic. "Men who had easily borne misery and danger and who had gone thru the most embarrassing and the most painful difficulties without weakness, bent beneath the weight of leisure and wealth. What made their misfortune was that they had attained what men ordinarily desire." In those dark days the social organization of Rome was crumbling and private corruption hastened public disintegration. Here in the United States the social organization seems to be sound, and to be able to adjust itself in time to changing conditions. Even if society is injured by the misdeeds and by the dangerous example of these energetic possessors of new wealth, it is not actually imperilled. They can harm the commonwealth only a little, even tho they wreck their own lives.

They may even be entitled to some small share of sympathy, for they are not ill-meaning even if they are ill-doing. Their early years have

been arduous, but full and rich in satisfactory achievement. By personal experience they were proving the truth of Stevenson's assertion that "to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor." All at once their work has been taken from them; and they have had no time to teach themselves how to play. They find themselves with no restraining duties of the kind they are accustomed to; and they have the widest opportunities for so-called "pleasure-seeking." At first they can scarcely be expected to bear in mind that real relaxation is possible only in the interstices of solid work. They can hardly help rushing forth ardently; and by a strenuous pleasure-seeking for its own sake, they soon atrophy the function of wholesome enjoyment. In this pursuit, for which they have had no preparation, they have no models before them but the idlers of inherited wealth. Trained to make money only and not to spend it, they are tempted to set up as rivals of these idlers and to devote themselves to a display which is wasteful as well as unsatisfactory, and to a self-indulgence which has been relaxt from all restraint.

It would be evidence in favor of the contention that the higher life of the American people "had been drugged with a spirit of mercenary materialism," if we found that the average man was

looking up to these lusty and lustful spenders as creatures to be envied and to be copied. Indeed, if this vulgar extravagance was widely accepted as the proof of success in life, then might we be tempted to despair of the republic. But this is not the case; in fact, it is very far from being the case. The attitude of the average man toward those guilty of this splurging magnificence is rarely envious; rather is it to some extent contemptuous. For the most part their doings have awakened an amused scorn, when they have not aroused a wholesome anger. The temper of the people is healthy enough, even if the judgments of the people are often swift, unsympathetic and unsparing. Probably the spectacle of the pitiful efforts of these workers turned idlers to get something for their money has not been without profit to the body politic, in that it has stirred the conscience to insist on a stricter accountability to the moral law.

It was in the first half of the nineteenth century that Lowell wrote to his nephew a word of advice, which is as valid to-day as it was three score years ago. "Pin this up in your memory,—that Nature abhors the credit system and that we never get anything in life till we have paid for it. Anything good, I mean; evil things we always pay for afterwards, and always when we find it hardest to do it." And this is curiously

like a statement of his own creed that Huxley once wrote to Kingsley,—"The ledger of the Almighty is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence." The antics of the idlers, whether their wealth is inherited or suddenly thrust upon them, are a spectacle for gods and men; but there is no doubt who will have to pay the piper for their dancing. It is with little desire to figure in the whirling that the most of us gaze at the sorry show.

While the public attitude toward the idle rich of either breed is never admiring, rarely envious and generally contemptuous, its attitude toward the powerful group of masterful manipulators of the necessities of life is distinctly hostile. Their example has been as demoralizing as their mischievous activity has been dangerous. But this the plain people now perceive; and as a result the plain people are asking for laws which have iron teeth and for prosecutions which will put prison-stripes on a few of these predatory financiers. Probably these self-seeking captains of industry have been astonisht of late when they discovered their unfortunate position in public opinion. Possibly they may even be moved to inquire whether the success they have achieved is really worth while,—whether it is worth what they have paid for it. Certainly they may

awaken to the fact that a man can scarcely be called successful in life when a large proportion of his fellow-citizens not only believe that he ought to be in jail, but would like to see him there. Success is at least a little dubious when men of immense wealth have to go into hiding or to escape out of the country to avoid the subpena that might force them to the alternative of perjury or of testifying against themselves.

There is no abiding benefit in a material prosperity, however swollen, when its possessors are under the ban of obloquy, when the organs of public opinion are united in holding them up to scorn and even to execration, and when no voice is ever raised in their defence except by those whose consciences have been purchased by gifts. Perhaps there is even a hint of hysteria in the perfervid denunciation of the criminal rich; but even hysteria may have its significance. A remorseless crushing down of other men is likely in time to create a social vacuum; and we all know how hard it is for man to live alone. We crave, every one of us, the good opinion of our fellow-men. There is little companionship in mere money. A man who has lived for himself, without service and without sacrifice, driven by greed or impelled by the sheer exhilaration of the game he is playing, is not likely to find much satisfaction in a solitary counting up of the stakes he has won.

He may be very slow to make this discovery, since he is likely to be sheathed in self-esteem, an almost inevitable accompaniment of a life devoted to mere money-making. Here indeed is another disadvantage of starting out with the amassing of wealth as the only goal of ambition. If this heart's desire is ever attained, it can only be at the cost of a disintegration of character. It is almost impossible for any one who has heapt up a fortune unaided not to be conceited. While the artist and the author may have wholesome doubts as to the abiding value of their works, the man who has made money can measure it with precision. There it is before him, to be reckoned fairly in dollars and cents; and the simple operation of elementary addition is the solid support of his high opinion of himself.

III

To be raised above immediate want, to be well-to-do, to have inherited or acquired a comfortable fortune,—this is a thing not to be despised, since it sets us free for work more interesting than barren self-support. But to have much more than this, to be possest of immense wealth, is to be heavily handicapt. The tale is told of a multi-millionaire who had inherited his gigantic fortune and who complained that he

had had no fun in life. He is reported as saying that he believed he had ability but he was not sure, as he had had no chance to prove it, no incentive to put forth the best that was in him. His excessive riches had disqualified him for taking part in any of the struggles which give zest to life, and he had found himself forced into a career of empty idleness. This seems to be a confirmation of a remark reported to have been made half a century ago by the man who was then supposed to be the wealthiest in New York, —to the effect that any one who had half a million "was just as well off as if he was rich." And this again recalls the remark of a clever old lawyer to a client of moderate means whom he was trying to dissuade from a risky venture;—"There isn't really so much difference between having a hundred thousand dollars and having a million; but there's an enormous difference between having a hundred thousand and having nothing at all!" After all, there is sense in Ben Jonson's saying,—"What need hath nature of silver dishes, multitudes of waiters, delicate pages, perfumed napkins? She requires meat only, and Hunger is not ambitious."

Probably many Americans who have made colossal fortunes have not been urged by avarice, by the naked desire for gain; rather have they been taken captive by the lure of the game itself.

unwilling to draw out so long as they could sit in at the table. Perhaps some of them may be victims of the false reasoning which encourages a belief that as a moderate fortune helps us to enjoy life, a fortune ten times as large will provide ten times as much enjoyment. To argue in this way is to ignore the law of diminishing returns; and it is to commit the grosser blunder of supposing that pleasure can be bought with a price. But we all know that there is no shop where pleasure is sold,—at least there is none where the products are guaranteed under the pure food law. Pleasure cannot be purchased, and it cannot even be sought for, with any chance of success in the pursuit. If we go gunning for pleasure, we are certain to come home with an empty bag, as well as with empty pockets; and the man who seeks that kind of sport generally starts out with an empty soul.

The truth is that pleasure is a by-product of work. The man who has something to do that he wants to do intensely and that he is able at last to do, gets pleasure as a fee, as a tip, as an extra allowance. Perhaps the keenest joy in life is to accomplish what you have long sought to do, even if you feel that the result might be a little better than you have achieved. Possibly the most exquisite gratification comes from the consciousness of a good job well done. The fool-

ish talk about the "curse of labor" is responsible for much of the haste to gain wealth that we may retire into idleness. But if we are honest with ourselves we know that labor is never a curse, that it is ever a blessing. The theory that work in itself is painful, or that it is the duty only of inferiors, is essentially aristocratic and fundamentally feudal; it is hostile to the democratic ideal. Work is what sweetens life and gives delight to all our days. That man is happiest and gets the utmost out of life who is neither poor nor rich and who is in love with his job, joying in the work that comes to his hands. And that man is truly accurst who is refused the privilege of congenial toil because he has too much money.

There is a significant passage in one of the letters that Taine wrote toward the end of his well-spent life,—an honorable career which had been crowned with all the outer rewards of success. "To my mind," he declared, "the hope of success, even success itself, does not suffice to sustain us; man needs an aim, something loved for its own sake, sometimes money or high place, which is the case of ordinary ambition; sometimes an object he will enjoy all by himself, a science he wishes to master, a problem which he wishes to solve to have done with it." The ordinary ambition, as Taine calls it here, money or high place, is a false beacon, and when he who is pos-

sest by it attains to his promised land he finds it to be only a slough of despond, if it has led him to starve his capacity for getting out of life the things that are really worth while. He may seem to have succeeded, but he is left lonely amid those whose ambitions have been better inspired.

In spite of much that may seem like evidence to the contrary, the American people as a whole are not now setting up false standards of success. It is not true that they are drugged with "the spirit of mercenary materialism." There is really little reason to believe that the average man here in the United States, however much he may wish to be better off than he is, weighs his fellow-men by their balance in the bank. In fact, the average man to-day is not without a pretty high opinion of those whose minds are not set on money-making; and he is in no danger of denouncing as a dire failure a career devoted to the loftier things of life. He may at times display too much curiosity about the methods and the amassed money of Mr. Midas and of Mr. Croesus; but he does not reveal any too great esteem for their persons. He does not actually envy them, even tho he may wish that he also had a little more of the material prosperity of which they have too much. It may even be doubted whether he holds them to have been more successful than the men whom he admires as the leaders of public

opinion and as the possessors of the things that money cannot buy. He may gossip about the latest entertainment or the latest benefaction of inordinately wealthy men, but he does not set them as high as he rates certain college presidents, certain artists, certain men of letters, certain inventors, whose power and success cannot be measured in money. He would not dispute Bacon's assertion that "no man's fortune can be an end worthy of the gift of being . . . and often the worthiest men abandon their fortunes willingly that they may have leisure for higher things."

All those who are old enough to remember the funeral of Peter Cooper and its outpouring of affectionate regard from all classes in the city he had made a better place to live in, will not need to be assured that the average American clings sturdily to the belief that public service, in office or out of it, is the true gage of a life. The most useful citizen is in fact the most successful; and it is those who have given loyal service to the community whom the community holds in highest regard. Probably the average American, if he were forced to give thought to it, would admit willingly that the unknown settlement-workers, who put behind them all desire for gain and who give their lives gladly to unostentatious service, have achieved a fuller measure of success than

the most of the men who have been conspicuous in amassing millions.

Not what we have, but what we use;
Not what we see, but what we choose—
These are the things that mar or bless
The sum of human happiness.

. . . .

Not as we take, but as we give;
Not as we pray, but as we live—
These are the things that make for peace,
Both now and after Time shall cease.

(1909.)

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